THE

LOTTERY OF LIFE.

VOL. II.

THE

LOTTERY OF LIFE.

BY

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

After long stormes and tempests overblowne,
The Sunne at length his joyous face doth cleare:
So when as Fortune all her spight hath showne,
Some blissful houres at last must needes appeare,
Else should afflicted wights ofttimes despeere.
SPENSER'S FAERY QUEENE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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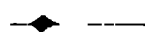
VOL. II.



SCENES

IN

THE LIFE OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER.



SCENE I.

"INDEED, my dear friend, you will destroy your health by this incessant labour," said Charles Dormer, a young barrister in the Temple, to Frederick Emmersor, an artist, as they sat in the studio of the latter. "You should take exercise, and be more in the open air than you are, or you will inevitably kill yourself."

"It is not the want of air or exercise that injures me, I assure you, Charles; it is the desire, the burning desire, to satisfy not only others, but myself. You know not what it is to work for hours, with a fair ideal in the ima-

gination which the hand in vain endeavours to represent, and then to feel how far short falls the attempt to pourtray what is so intensely felt. Look here!" and he drew back a curtain and exposed to view, a picture representing two young girls of such exquisite beauty, that Charles Dormer uttered an exclamation of delight. "Ah! my friend, if these imperfect resemblances please you, what would be your feelings of admiration—of wonder—could you but see the originals;—then would you turn with the same dissatisfaction that I do, from these pale and imperfect representations of charms to which Lawrence himself, who so well understood female loveliness and so admirably delineated it, would have found it impossible to render justice. Day after day, have I vainly attempted to give the canvas her smile," and he pointed to one of the faces, "which haunts me, but finding that impossible, I have endeavoured to paint that serious but sweet expression which so often pervades her countenance. This is my last attempt; but it almost maddens me to look on it; for it is no more to be compared to her than I am to Hercules."

"Nevertheless, it is lovely," said Dormer; "and the other beauty, who is she?"

"Lady Isabella Crighton, the cousin of Lady Emily."

"Lord Blasonberrie and Lady Emily Home," said the servant of Emmerson, throwing open the door, leaving Dormer just time to rush into a small room inside the studio, where he had previously not unfrequently ensconced himself when similarly caught by the visitors of his friend.

"Good morrow, Mr. Emmerson; we are early, but I was longing to see what progress you had made with the portraits. Why, bless my soul! they are perfect. But you have changed the expression of my daughter's; yesterday it smiled, and I was very well satisfied,—no easy matter to accomplish, Mr. Emmerson, I can tell you, when a father has but one daughter,—yet now it looks grave, and I like it, if any thing, better than before. Yes, it is perfect."

"I am made but too happy and proud, my lord, by your approbation; but I confess I have not satisfied myself."

"Come here, Emily, let me look at you—stand there, my child, near the picture—there—take off your bonnet, my love."

Lady Emily did as she was told; and even Dormer, who could see her reflected in a glass

opposite the door, through the opening of which he was peeping, confessed to himself that the portrait failed to render justice to the beautiful original.

"What do you think of the picture, my child?" asked the father.

"It appears to me to be faultless, father; only, perhaps, that my cousin's resemblance is less beautiful than the original, and mine is a little too——" handsome, she would have said, but a dread of being thought desirous of a compliment deterred her from uttering the word, and she filled up the sentence by saying—"too young."

Never before had Dormer heard such a voice; low and sweet, yet distinct—there was melody in all its tones.

"Too young, Emily? O! that *is* capital. Why, to hear you, one would suppose that you were no longer in the first blush of youth. Too young, indeed! why, how old do you take my daughter to be, Mr. Emmerson?"

"About seventeen, my lord."

"Right; she is *just* seventeen, and not yet a week over her birth-day. The more I look on the portraits, the better I like them.—Isabella looks round with that haughty air I

have sometimes remarked in her, and Emily, in spite of the fine feathers which I insisted on her wearing, has precisely that expression I've remarked so often in her face, when nursing me when I've been laid up by the gout. I know that look well, and so I ought, for I too often call it forth by the frequent attacks, which always alarm my dear little nurse," and the fond father drew his daughter closer to his side, and bestowed a glance on her so full of affection, that her dove-like eyes became humid with tenderness. "You must come down to Blasonberrie Castle, Mr. Emmerson, when the season is over in London. You shall paint another picture of my daughter for me, and one of me for her. You see, Emily, I don't forget my promise to you of sitting again for my portrait."

The simple "thank you, dear father," uttered by this lovely girl, seemed more eloquent than aught Emmerson ever listened to before, and Dormer nearly agreed with him in this opinion.

"When may I send for the picture, Mr. Emmerson? I am longing to have it home, now that my niece has left us: it will extend your fame too."

" In a week, my lord, I hope it will be quite finished."

" Good morning, Mr. Emmerson, good morning;—take my arm, Emily." And Lord Blasonberrie and his lovely girl departed.

When Charles Dormer entered the studio again, he found Frederick Emmerson standing entranced before the picture, and so wholly engrossed by it, as to be unconscious of the presence of his friend. " No," muttered he, " I cannot bear to look on it; it has none of her beauty, none of those thousand indescribable charms, which I see, but cannot pourtray. I must——"

" Not change a single feature," interrupted Dormer; " for, be assured, your picture is as like as art can be to nature."

" Is she not more than painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love?" asked Emmerson.

" Yes, indeed, she is exquisitely beautiful; and what a voice!—it is a pity she is so chary of it though, for I think she did not utter above ten words while here. Is she always so taciturn?"

" She talks but little; yet, strange to say,

I never remarked it until you asked me the question."

"Those aristocratic dames, however young, are apt, I am told, to remind us of our lower degree, of the difference of our station; and there can certainly be no surer mode of effecting this than by silence."

"You wrong her, she is not proud," said Emmerson, with a warmth that evinced how deep was the interest excited by all that touched on Lady Emily Home.

"Is she then dull, or inanimate?"

"Dull, or inanimate! You could not surely have seen her face with its varying expression, each and all beautiful, or you would not ask this."

"How, then, do you explain her silence?"

"Now that you remind me of it, I should say that it proceeded from thoughtfulness. When painting her, I have felt a sentiment approaching to awe in the contemplation of such rare, such intellectual loveliness, something like what I believe Raphael to have experienced when painting those Madonnas we delight to look on. I could no more commence a conversation on ordinary topics with Lady

Emily Home, than I could bring myself to sing a bacchanalian song before one of Raphael's Virgins. The intelligence of her countenance precludes the suspicion of dulness, and the candour and gentleness of it banishes that of pride. Had she spoken often, I could not have painted her, for her voice thrills through my frame. Her cousin, whom many might pronounce to be as handsome, never produced this effect on me."

"My dear Frederick, you are smitten—by all that is good, you are! You may well open your eyes and stare at me, like one awakened suddenly from sleep, but such is the fact."

"You offend, you pain me, by this ill-timed pleasantry, Charles; do not, if you love me, resume it It seems like a profanation to make her the subject of a jest."

"By Jove! I was never more serious in my life, Frederick; take care of yourself, or yours will be a desperate case. Be warned in time."

"As well might I presume 'to love some bright particular star' as this peerless lady; both are alike beyond my reach; and know you not the line—

'None without hope e'er loved the brightest fair?'"

"Yes and the sequel, too—

'For love will hope where reason would despair,'"

said Dormer, looking archly at his friend.

"No, no; the sentiment inspired by this lovely girl is not love; it is something totally different,—awe, reverence, devotion, if you will, but not that passion experienced by every-day men for pretty women. Never do I look on her without being reminded of the lines in *Comus*—

'A thousand liveried angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal.'"

"Well, if this be not love, I know not what is. Deceive not yourself, Frederick, with regard to your own feelings, lest you discover when too late that you are their dupe," and so saying, Charles Dormer hurried from the studio, to avoid the repetition of the denial of the truth of his suspicions, which he perceived Emmerson was about to utter, leaving him angry, and agitated at the expression of them.

"I thought he knew me better," soliloquized

Emmerson. "In love, indeed! Bah! how I dislike this term, used by fashionable libertines to express some temporary caprice often felt for an unworthy object, by lawyers' clerks, ay, and even by men-milliners, to define the gross inclination excited towards some dress-maker, or retailer of tapes and bobbins. Beautiful Lady Emily! how different is the sentiment you excite in my breast! Even here, in the privacy of my studio, in which this faint shadow of your loveliness seems to consecrate the chamber, I no more durst dwell on your pictured face, though wrought by my own hand, with other or freer gaze than the devotee regards the idol of his worship, than I durst look into your deep azure eyes when your presence transforms this homely room into a temple, whose sanctity I tremble to invade by the indulgence of one unholy desire, one earthly passion. Yet I can examine the likeness of the Lady Isabella Crighton with as much calmness as if it was the portrait of my grandmother. Others, in my place, might feast upon the exquisite beauty of the resemblance I have wrought, lovely Lady Emily, faint and unworthy as it is, when compared with you; but I approach it with awe, and shrink before the

calm and pure expression of the inanimate eyes as I should do before the radiance of the living ones."

SCENE II.

Pale and thoughtful, Frederick Emmerson stood before his easel, on the day following the one described, and on which was placed a portrait nearly finished. Seated in a chair was a man of about fifty-five, whose rotund form displayed a vast expanse of white Marseilles, in the shape of a waistcoat, around which a glossy blue coat, with bright gilt buttons, formed an unpicturesque background. A huge bunch of seals, suspended from a massive gold chain that hung from the pocket of his nether garment, furnished occupation for one hand, the fingers of which were continually playing with them; while the other, on the last finger of which sparkled a large diamond ring, reposed on the arm of his chair. In his well-plaited chemise-frill shone a solitaire of considerable value, which he from time to time arranged, so as to exhibit it still more conspicuously. The rubicund face that protruded above the somewhat tightened neckcloth, told a tale of long

continued indulgence in the pleasures of the table. The chin reminded one of the breast of the pelican, and seemed filled with some portion of the produce of the purple grape, so freely quaffed by its owner, and though closely packed beneath the cravat, was continually endeavouring to overpass its boundary. The lips were thick and dry looking; the nose, of large dimensions, was of a still deeper tint of red than the cheeks; and the eyes resembled nothing so much as bottled gooseberries. The forehead retreated so suddenly, that it gave the notion of having done so to avoid a contact with the fiery red nose beneath, which seemed to have parched up the natural crystalline of the eyes that twinkled near them. A dark, juvenile-looking wig crowned the head, and ill suited the light colored and bristly eyebrows, which denoted the natural hue of the departed hair.

"May I look, Mr. Emmerson?"

"If you desire it, sir; but I think it would be better to wait until the portrait is more advanced."

"No! no! I'll look at once," and Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson advances to the picture.

"Don't you think that the face is too red? *I* surely can't be said to have a red face?"

"It does not strike me as having too much colour."

"Take off some of the red, I'm sure 'twill look better."

"It really would injure the general effect."

"Hang general effect! what care I for it."

"But my picture, sir."

"Your picture! *mine*, you mean; and, as it is mine, I must have it done in my own way."

"But the likeness, sir."

"Ay, the likeness! that's the very thing I mean, that's what I want, to have it made more like; for at present it is not at all like—not a bit; there is ten times—ay, twenty times too much colour. And the nose! you can't say the nose is like. Why, it's positively redder than the cheeks, and that's not natural, is it? No one's nose is redder than the cheeks. You must change all that, indeed you must. When you have changed the cheeks and nose, I'll tell you what next to do, for the eyes and mouth must be altered—totally altered."

Emmerson nearly groaned, and felt tempted to decline again touching the picture; but the

recollection of a mother and two sisters wholly dependent on him, checked the impulse.

Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson again seated himself, and said—" Now look at me, and you will see that my nose is not red, and that the cheeks are quite of another color."

Emmerson looked, and saw that the exertion of moving, and perhaps also the displeasure experienced by his sitter, had rendered the face so much more red, that his portrait looked pale in comparison with the original. Again the dispirited artist groaned internally over his disagreeable task, as he took up his pencil.

" I don't think you paint diamonds well," said Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson. " Why can't you make them shine? Look at this pin, and ring; see how they glisten, and show different colours, red, green, and yellow, and send out rays! Why can't you paint them so, instead of merely putting a spot of white paint, that looks like nothing but a dab of bread sauce?"

Emmerson's servant now announced that Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson's carriage was come, and in it a lady who desired to come up.

" A friend of mine, who I wish to see my picture—may she come up, Mr. Emmerson?"

"Certainly, sir."

And in walked the lady. "So glad to see you, *dear* Mr. B. T.; hope I haven't kept you waiting; longing to see your portrait. Dear me, how beautiful it is! The very image! Did I ever?—no, I never, saw such a likeness. Just your smile too. It's quite perfect. Pray, Mr. Emmerson, don't touch it any more, for fear of injuring the resemblance."

"Humph!" muttered or rather growled Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson, upon which the lady cast an anxious glance at him. "Don't you think it is a great deal too red in the face, Mrs. Meredith?"

"O dear! yes; a *great* deal too red, ten times too much colour. How could I be so stupid as not to have seen that at the first glance? But I was so delighted, and so flurried, that——"

"But don't you observe that the nose is unlike? it's positively even more red than the cheeks."

"Well, so it is; where were my eyes not to have seen it? O! Mr. —— I beg your pardon, your name——"

"Emmerson, madam."

"O! Mr. Emmerson, you must be very par-

ticular, *I*—that is, *we*—would not have his nose painted the least different from what it is for all the world. Every one says he has such a good nose, quite a pet of a nose. And now that I look steadily at the picture, I declare I begin to think it is not half so like as I at first thought it. Why, it's much too old—yes, positively twenty years too old, and hasn't got that very remarkable sort of a look that Mr. B. T. has sometimes.

"I told you, Mr. Emmerson, that it wasn't like; and you see this lady, who knows my face better perhaps than any one else, is of the same opinion. *I* don't care about the matter myself, but one likes to have one's friends satisfied, you know."

"Paint the cheeks a delicate pink, Mr. Emmoton, just like what you see; and the nose not a bit red, for Mr. B. T.'s nose never is red; and make the figure much slighter—in fact, exactly like his; and give the face that very remarkable look that his has sometimes. Now, pray mind this, and then I'm sure the picture will be as like as possible."

"Yes, do what Mrs. Meredith tells you; no one knows my face better than she does."

"I know it by heart," whispered the lady,

which whisper produced a gentle tap on the arm from Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson, and sundry "ha, ha's" from her.

The announcement of another sitter sent away Mrs. Meredith and her friend, who left the studio, declaring that they would return in a few days, and that they hoped to find the picture entirely changed.

SCENE III.

"I hope you will be as successful as you always are, Mr. Emmerson," said a lady in widow's weeds, the paleness of whose face, though it told of sorrow and delicate health, impaired not its beauty.

"I trust I shall be able to satisfy you, madam," was the reply, as Emmerson arranged his canvas, and looked at his colours.

"I have brought his uniform, as I wish to have him painted in it," and a deep sigh heaved the bosom of the speaker.

"How I should like to have your picture, mother, to hang up in my berth—but no, I wouldn't like the other midshipmen or sailors to see it; I'd rather have a miniature, to keep in my desk, with my Bible and all your letters, or to have tied round my neck, that I might

look at it whenever I had a moment to myself. Whenever I get any prize-money, I'll send it home to have your miniature done for me, mother, that I will."

The speaker was a beautiful boy of about twelve years old, with a singular mixture of gentleness and manliness in his countenance, that at one glance excited a strong interest in his favour in the sensitive mind of Frederick Emmerson. The boy looked continually towards his mother with such tenderness beaming in his handsome face, that the artist caught the beautiful expression, and ere more than two hours had elapsed, fixed it on his canvas. During that period the mother had more than once been compelled to leave her seat, and pretend to be occupied in examining the drawings that were hung round the room, in order that she might wipe away the tears that continually started to her eyes, as the thought of the approaching separation with her son, the only tie that now bound her to existence, haunted her. But her emotion escaped not the observation of the youth, and a tear springing into his deep blue eyes, marked his sympathy with it. Once or twice he rose from his chair, and embraced her, whispering words of

love, that only increased the gushing tears he sought to arrest.

"When I am an admiral, mother, you shall have as good a house as we had once—aye, and a carriage too, and you shall come on board my ship in my boat, manned by my sailors," and the eyes of the generous boy sparkled with animation and pleasure at the anticipation; while those of the fond mother glistened through her tears.

Frederick Emmerson requested her to sit by her son, saying, as an excuse for so doing, that he could paint his picture better if the sitter's eyes were not continually turning across the room to her.

"Then I must hold her hand in mine, if I may not look at her," said the youth, "for I shall be with her so short a time, that I want to have as much of her as possible," a *naïve* avowal repaid by a glance of inexpressible love by the mother.

There she sat, her eyes beaming with tenderness, fixed on her son; and Emmerson, charmed with the maternal beauty of the character of her countenance, rapidly made one of his most successful likenesses, while the mother

and son were totally unconscious that he was not painting the latter.

"May I now look at the portrait, Mr. Emmerson?" asked the lady, after two hours' patient sitting from the time she had changed her position, yet so wholly engrossed was she by her melancholy reflections, as to have forgotten the lapse of time.

"Pardon me, madam, for wishing this young gentleman to see my work first."

The youth left his seat, and, on advancing near the easel, clapped his hands with delight, and exclaimed — "'Tis she! — 'tis she! — O! mother, dear mother, how happy I am!—look, look, so exactly like you, and just as you have looked ever since I was made a midshipman!" The boy hugged his mother with rapture, and then turning to Frederick Emmerson, seized his hand, and wrung it, saying, "Ah! when I'm an admiral, you shall see that I do not forget this."

The mother, overcome by a sense of gratitude to Emmerson, for the delicacy and promptitude with which he had anticipated the wish of her son, endeavoured to thank him; but when he held up the portrait of the beautiful

boy, her full heart relieved itself by a shower of tears.

"Only wait, dear mother, till I get my first prize money, and Mr. Emmerson shall have it all, that he shall. O! you don't know how I have longed to have your picture, that I might look at it when I am on the sea, and so far from you, that it will seem all like a dream that I can be so distant from my own dear mother."

"Words are poor, sir, to tell you how I feel your kindness," sobbed rather than spoke the mother, as she reached out her small and attenuated hand to Frederick Emmerson, while the manly boy seizing the other hand of the artist, wrung it affectionately, and repeated, "Only wait till I get my prize money, and you shall see," and "When I am an admiral all my cabin shall be covered with pictures of my mother painted by you."

Emmerson never felt half the pleasure in receiving the most munificent remuneration given him for any of his works, that he did in refusing the payment pressed on him by the grateful mother, and in the reflection that he had lightened the sorrow of separation to her noble and warm-hearted boy.

"Yes, even the poor have their enjoyments," said he, "when their talents enable them to bestow a happiness that wealth cannot always command, and such occasions make me forget for the time being the wearing cares of life, when the existence of those dear to me, depending on this poor hand, compel an exercise of it that is more than my weak frame can well support."

SCENE IV.

"You will not require me to sit long, nor frequently, I hope," said Lady Lamerton, the widow of a city knight and *millionaire*, who had bequeathed to her the greater portion of his wealth.

This lady was in her fortieth year, and had been so much less kindly treated by Nature than by Fortune, that her utmost efforts—and they were indefatigable—to supply the absence of every feminine attraction by the aid of art, only served to render her ugliness still more remarkable. A profusion of black ringlets fell over cheeks covered with rouge, and shaded eyes, whose obliquity of vision gave a peculiarly disagreeable expression to her countenance. Her lips were so unnaturally red, as to look

like thin pieces of sealing-wax, and when open, displayed teeth whose decay might perhaps with reason be attributed to their proximity to their painted portals. A dress suited to blooming eighteen, and an affectation unsuited to any age, added to the disagreeable effect of this mass of ugliness, the first glance of which shocked Emmerson.

"I detest sitting, and indeed I never would have consented to have my portrait done, were it not that I have been so tormented by all my friends. I hope you will not require more than three sittings?"

"I am sorry, madam, that I cannot specify precisely what number of sittings will be necessary to complete the portrait, but I hope not a great many."

O! that's what all you artists say. Must I take off my bonnet?"

"If you wish to be painted in your hair."

"Certainly I do. But how do you think I ought to be dressed? Lord Alverstock says I look best in a costume *à-la-Vandyke*, and Sir Henry St. Ives insists that a modern dress suits me better."

"Whichever you prefer, madam. Will you be so obliging as to be seated?"

"What! must I positively sit in that chair mounted on three high steps?"

"The light is most advantageous in that position, madam."

"Well, if it must be so; you are all just the same, always making one sit in some particular chair or corner, just as if it could make any difference."

"Be so obliging as to turn a little to the right, and look at me?"

"How tiresome! won't it do as well if I look any other way? I hate staring, or being stared at. I desired two or three of my friends to come and stay here while I am sitting, that I might not be too much bored; I wonder they have not come."

"I am afraid their presence might interrupt my labour."

"And why so, pray?"

"By preventing your sitting as tranquilly as could be desired."

"How very odd!—but all you artists are just the same, always wanting one to sit as if one was screwed to one's chair. Let me see how far you have got?"

"Pray do not ask to see the picture until it is more advanced."

"Why, you have been half an hour—yes, a full half hour, for I've had my watch in my hand all the time, and yet you do not wish to let me see what you have been doing; but that was just the way with Sir Thomas Lawrence, *he* couldn't bear to let people look at their portraits the first sitting; yes, you are all the same. O dear! (and an unsuppressed yawn followed the exclamation) how very tiresome sitting for one's picture is. Could you not let me read, or do something to amuse myself?"

"I am sorry you——"

"So you all say; but now, do let me look, it will divert me a little."

"I hope you will excuse me, madam."

And here two or three voices on the stairs announced the arrival of visitors, and prevented the expression of impatience the lady was on the point of uttering.

"So you are come at last," said she, as two men of fashionable exteriors entered the room; "why did you not come sooner? I have been here a whole hour, yes; positively an hour by my watch, and am tired to death; and Mr. Emmerson won't let me see what he has been doing."

. "I only waited to give time for some progress to be made with the picture," said one; "and I could not get away before," said the other.

"Do look, Lord Alverstock, and tell me if Mr. Emmerson has at all succeeded."

"I have done so little," said Emmerson, "that you can hardly judge."

"*Au contraire*, the sketch is very like, and promises to be excellent."

"Now, let Sir Henry St. Ives see it."

The latter gentleman examined the portrait, shook his head, and then said, "Don't you think the mouth wants something?"

"Certainly, I have only sketched it, and the want of colour——"

"O! yes, I see now, *it is* the want of colour, and Lady Lamerton has such peculiarly red lips."

"It was one of Lawrence's great merits that he always painted the lips so very red; when I sate to him," said the lady, "he made the lips of my portrait even redder than mine."

"I deny that," said Sir Henry St. Ives, "it would be impossible; for yours are as red as

my jockey's jacket, in which he won the Oaks for me last year."

"What a comparison! Did you ever hear such a one, Lord Alverstock?"

"I should have compared them to coral, but even that is too hacknied," answered his lordship, with a bow.

"Well, if my jockey's jacket does not satisfy you, what say you to the shell of a boiled lobster? for, hang me! if I ever see one without thinking of your ladyship's lips."

Peals of laughter from Lady Lamerton and Lord Alverstock followed this last speech, during which Frederick Emmerson, annoyed and disgusted, heartily wished the group away.

"Well, I shall never forget the boiled lobster," said the lady, "how very original! yet, after all, I don't think my lips are so *very* much redder than other people's,—do you, Lord Alverstock?"

"They are so much more beautiful than those of other people, that no comparison can be instituted."

"How like you, Lord Alverstock, to say so; you always are so polite, and have something civil to say,—hasn't he, Sir Henry?"

"Alverstock doesn't want the art of paying compliments, I must acknowledge."

"O! then *you* think he complimented when he spoke of the beauty of my lips," said the lady, with an air of pique.

"No, in *that* instance he could not compliment; I defy him to say more of them than they deserve."

"*Apropos* of lips—did you see Mrs. Luxmore biting hers all last evening at Lady Dashwood's, to make them look red?"

"You don't say so?"

"Positively."

"Then, by Jove! her husband has a better chance of being rid of her than I thought."

"Why so? do, pray tell us?"

"Because her lips have half an inch thick of paint on them."

"Poor Mrs. Luxmore! how very shocking! But are you quite sure it is true?"

"Certain."

"I had no idea that any application of that sort to the lips was pernicious," said Lady Lamerton, her face assuming a look of considerable alarm, on observing which the two gentlemen in attendance on her, exchanged very

comical glances, and Emmerson wondered at the unblushing effrontery with which both of them answered—

"O! to be sure not, how could *you* know any thing of such things, *you* who never have occasion to use such aids?"

"No, *you* could spare some of your beauty, instead of seeking to add to it."

"Have you seen my new *parure* of rubies and diamonds, Lord Alverstock?"

"I have not remarked them, I confess; but who can look at ornaments when you are near them?"

"Ay, that's what I say," observed Sir Henry St. Ives; "beautiful women make a great mistake when they put on rich jewels; they should leave them to be worn by ugly women, who require something to set them off."

"But when people have large fortunes, they are expected to make a suitable appearance," said the purse-proud *parvenue* Lady Lamerton.

"With due submission to your better judgment," observed Lord Alverstock, "I should say that simplicity of dress in people of great wealth was a mark of refined taste."

"And *I* think that if rich people must show they are rich, they cannot take a better method

than by having handsome carriages, a stable full of fine horses, and giving capital dinners, and plenty of them," said the baronet.

"You are so fond of horses, Sir Henry," said the lady. "But bless me! I have positively been here two hours; really, Lord Alverstock and Sir Henry, you have made yourselves so agreeable that I have not felt the time heavy since you came. I could not have remained half the time had you not been here. I hope, Mr. Emmerson, you have nearly finished the picture?"

"I have been unable, madam, to advance it much while you have been laughing or talking."

"That's just the way with all you artists; you fancy people can sit whole hours in a chair, bored to death without moving. But let me see it."

"Really, madam, I——"

"It's no use refusing, I must positively look," and suiting the action to the word, Lady Lamerton rose from her seat, and placed herself before the picture. After contemplating it for a few minutes, she exclaimed, "I don't think it the least like! Only look at the eyes! mine, surely, are very different?"

"Very different, indeed," said the baronet. "The nose, too, is wholly unlike mine; and the mouth is at least twice as large. The chin may be a little like, but what is that dark thing under it? I surely have no discoloration under the chin?"

"That is the shadow produced by the chin. The portrait, madam, is not, as I previously assured you, sufficiently advanced to enable you to judge of the resemblance."

"Then why is it not, pray?"

"No picture of this size, madam, and in oil, can be sufficiently advanced in a sitting of two hours."

"So you all say, you are all just the same. Look, Lord Alverstock, do you think it has the least likeness?"

"I must say I think it will be like, at present it is merely *ebauché*."

"I'm sorry *you* think it ever will, or ever *can* be like," said the lady, angrily; "and your last remark renders the picture more objectionable. Tell me, Sir Henry, if *you* find it resembles me?"

"I can't say I do," replied the wily baronet; "but I think with Alverstock, it has a very *débauché* look."

"Sir!" said Emmerson, his pale cheek becoming red with anger.

"I only repeat what Lord Alverstock said, Mr. Emmerson."

"Yes, Sir Henry only repeated what Lord Alverstock remarked," interrupted the lady, "and I think it very improper that you should have given me that sort of look."

A peal of laughter from Lord Alverstock seemed to increase the ire of Lady Lamerton, and made Sir Henry look amazed. "I said no such thing," said the peer, as soon as his laughter subsided enough to permit him to speak, "I merely said the picture was but *ebauché*, and not being aware that Sir Henry does not know French, I could not imagine the word could be mistaken."

The baronet looked angry, and the lady offended. The first muttered something about the folly of using French words when English would do better, and the latter said, that "for her part, she never regretted her ignorance of a language which she was quite sure was very objectionable."

It was clear that the lady was offended with the peer, for having admitted that the portrait bore any resemblance to her, and his laughter

at the mistake relative to the French phrase added to her displeasure.

Lord Alverstock and Sir Henry St. Ives, both men of ruined fortunes, were seeking to retrieve them by a marriage with the rich widow. The baronet, gross and ignorant, was more suited to the lady's taste; but the rank of the peer disposed her to barter her gold for his coronet. It was while her mind was thus undecided, that the good breeding which prompted Lord Alverstock to avoid wounding the feelings of Emmerson by agreeing in the unjust answer pronounced by Lady Lamerton on her portrait, gave the first advantage over him to his rival, who, not only still more needy in circumstances, but infinitely less delicate in mind, was ready to assent to whatever the lady, whose wealth he aspired to possess, asserted.

The party soon withdrew, and a short time after Emmerson read in the newspaper the announcement of the marriage of Sir Henry St. Ives to the Lady Lamerton, relict of the late Sir Matthew Lamerton, Knight, of Clapham Rise. An union which the scene in his studio had not a little tended to facilitate. The por-

trait was never completed; for the simple reason, that the lady deeming it unlikely that the artist could render justice to her charms, never returned again to favor him with a sitting, and forgot to pay the half price generally advanced on the first commencement of a picture.

GALERIA;

OR, THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

" Pourquois tous les hommes ne voyent-ils pas sans une emotion profonde les ruines, même les plus humble? ne serait-ce partout simplement pour eux un image du malheur dont ils sentent diversement le poids? Si les cimetières font penser à la mort, un village abandonné fait songer au peines de la vie; mais la mort est un malheur prévu, tandis que les peines de la vie sont infinies; or, l'infini n'est-il pas le secret des grandes mélancholies?"—Balzac.

" Would the signora like to see the deserted village?" asked the master of the post-house where we stopped to refresh our horses, on our route from Rome to the Castle of Bracciano; " it is not above a quarter of a mile from this place, and those few strangers who travel our road all go to examine it."

Luigi, for so was the master of this post-house named, was a handsome, intelligent-look-

ing man: his military bearing, and the mustache that shaded his lip, denoted he had served in the army; and a politeness and gentleness in his manner bore evidence that he had been accustomed to present himself before ladies: his language was correct, and, as well as his appearance and manner, indicated that he had seen much of the world; while a certain romantic air betrayed that its contact had not obliterated the natural bias of his character, which was that of a reflective and sentimental turn.

"There stands the village," said he, pointing to a mass of buildings seated on an eminence, overlooking the fertile valley of Arona; along which the clear and sparkling river of that name glided like a silvery serpent, but shaping itself, sporting through verdant meadows, and then losing itself amidst wooded knolls. We set out to visit Galeria, our communicative host acting as guide; and, after a short walk, found ourselves on a rustic bridge, at the base of the eminence on which the ruined village is seated; and which, seen from this spot, has a most picturesque appearance.

Crossing the bridge we ascended a steep and winding road, each turn of which presented rich beauties; and arrived at an arched gate of stone-work, surmounted by a clock, whose dial still remained, though the hands that had been wont to mark the flight of time, had disappeared.

This gate formed the entrance into Galeria, and the view from it was beautiful. The village consisted of about fifty houses, containing from three to five rooms each, many of them having their rude walls covered with gaudy prints of saints and martyrs, attired in robes of glaring scarlet, ultra-marine blue and bright yellow, and possessing little of the beauty of holiness—being most hideous to behold; the artist who designed them having carefully avoided all violation of the scriptural commandment, "Not to make unto ourselves the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth."

The doors and windows still remained, and some wooden articles of furniture were scattered around; the ashes stood on the deserted hearths, wild flowers and ivy nearly covered

the windows, and innumerable birds were flitting about, and sending forth their joyful notes. Each house had its garden, once neat and trim, as our guide assured us, but now presenting little wildernesses, intermingled with bright flowers, peeping forth from the tangled mazes of shrubs and weeds that had nearly overgrown them. A silence, interrupted only by the carols of the birds, reigned around; and as we pulled the latch of the doors of many of these humble cottages, and entered the deserted chambers, the echoes of our steps sent forth a melancholy sound. A small cemetery, with its wooden and stone crosses, nearly covered by briars, nettles, and weeds, stood at one side of the village; and on the other was a deep well, with its bucket and chain, the iron thickly coated by the rust, which was the consequence of its long disuse and exposure to the weather. Near to this neglected implement was a stone bench, sheltered by a clump of trees, where, probably, the aged peasants had been wont to enjoy the delicious evenings, only to be found in a southern climate; and in front of it was a level space, which looked as if it had been the

play-ground, or the scene of the dances of the young.

A small chapel, with its cross and bell, a fragment of the rope for ringing the latter still hanging from the wall, showed that the humble inhabitants of this secluded spot were not forgetful of religion. Here all the drama of life had been performed, from the *entrée* to the *exit;* but where were the performers? Not a soul was to be seen; not even a domestic animal passing through the grass-grown streets —all—all were fled!

"Ah, signora!" said our host of the post-house, in answer to my exclamation, "it is a long and a melancholy story; but, if you wish, I will relate it. My poor mother, peace be to her soul! often repeated it to me as we sat on the bench in the porch, when the moonlight was silvering the old gateway of Galeria, and shining on the dial of the clock, which looked like the face of a spirit.

"Well, signora, forty years ago, this same deserted village was a scene of active and cheerful industry; parents surrounded by their children and grand-children, young people who had grown up together, and learned to love,

ere yet the meaning of the word was known to them; for, in our sunny clime, signora, we experience the passion before reason is sufficiently mature to enable us to combat its violence; we are unconscious of either the cause or the consequences. In the lonely and quiet spot over which we are now passing, the sounds of the guitar and tambourine mingled with the hum of joyous voices every evening, when amusement succeeded the labours of the day. Among all the young women of Galeria, Vincenza Martelli was the most beautiful; her slight and graceful form lost none of its charms in the pretty *camiciuola** and short, full, plaited *gonnella*† of our Roman peasant dress; and her glossy raven hair appeared still more black and shining, in contrast with the snowy *fettola*‡ that was laid in a square fold over it. Her straight brows, and the bright eyes that sparkled beneath them, gave expression to her oval and clear brown face; and if the rose shone not on her cheek, the rich red of her lip made one forget its absence. Her teeth, signora, my poor mother used to say, were as white as young

* Bodice. † Petticoat. ‡ Plaited kerchief.

almonds when they first leave the shell; and her laugh was as joyous as sunshine. The neighbours used to pause to look at her as she returned from the well, an amphora of water on her head, so balanced, that not a single drop escaped, though her hands did not touch it; and her step was so light, that it seemed as if her little feet would not crush a flower. Every one talked of her beauty except Giovanni Spinelli, who felt its power the most—he was never tired of looking at her; and, even while they were yet children, the neighbours used to call them the lovers.

"Giovanni was the handsomest youth in the village, and perhaps it was for this reason that rumour first distinguished him as a fitting partner for Vincenza. He sought for her the ripest grapes and most melting figs; the first violets of the spring and the last rose of the summer were sure to be hers; for it is only by such simple gifts, signora, that the poor and humble can show their affection. Vincenza would receive them with pleasure, and repay Giovanni with a smile and kind words; nor was a glance wanting such as love alone can bestow. She would place the flowers in her

hair and bosom, where they remained, until seeking her lowly couch she consigned them to a vase of water fresh from the fountain, and placed them on the table close by her pillow, beneath the picture of the Madonna. At other times she would weave the flowers into a garland for the large image of her patron saint that adorned the chapel; and it was allowed, that no girl in the village could weave a garland to be compared with that of Vincenza.

"The affection of Vincenza and Giovanni had grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength; neither could remember when it had commenced, or when they had been able to support existence asunder. Together they sung the love ditties that they played on the guitar, or danced the tarantella to the merry sound of the tambourine; together they had knelt and prayed at the shrine of the Madonna, and offered up votive flowers before the images of their tutelar saints. Each had become associated with the thoughts, feelings, dreams and hopes of the other; they had never contemplated the possibility of even a temporary separation; their little hamlet was the world to them, the boundary of their wishes,

and the scene where their happiness was to be crowned.

"The chapel now before us, signora, was viewed by the lovers as the place where one day their vows were to be sanctified, their children to be baptised, and their own bodies to be deposited, previously to their consignment to their last narrow home; all this had occurred to all who, under their observation or within their knowledge, had, like them, grown together, loved and married; and therefore Vincenza and Giovanni believed it would be their fate.

"This supposed certainty of the future, threw an additional shade of tenderness over the feelings of the young people: they wholly depended on each other for happiness, and the few hours of absence that the manual labours of Giovanni in the fields occupied, were sustained and counted with impatience by both. How often has Vincenza looked to the west, to see whether the sun gave token of seeking his couch, that being the signal of Giovanni's return. Seldom had he repaired to the field without bearing in his hat a bouquet of flowers, the gift of Vincenza; and as seldom did he return without bringing some rustic offering to her.

"Ah! signora, the richest gifts which the grand can bestow, yield not such pure pleasure as the humble offerings of the poor and lowly! I, signora, have seen much of the world; I have served in the army, and been many years a courier, during which time I have been employed in some noble families; and on occasions of marriages, have seen jewels given, which might ransom a prince, and whose dazzling lustre made my eyes ache, without their conferring half the delight that a single riband or kerchief of silk has excited in the breast of one of our peasants, when presented by the hand of love.

"Ay, you grand ones of the earth, signora, have so many different sources of gratification, that when you love, it is only another enjoyment added to your vast store; but, with us, love constitutes the whole, the sole, the only one! You have each your different pursuits, your different pleasures, and can amuse yourselves so well, when asunder, that you depend not on each other for happiness. Forgive me, signora, for my boldness in expressing my reflections, and permit me to return to my narrative.

"So genuine had been the affection of the lovers, that it created a sympathy and respect throughout the hamlet; their parents treated them as affianced; and each rural belle or beau quoted them as models of example to the other, when dissatisfied by negligence or coquetry; for, even in the most remote hamlet, signora, a woman is still a woman.

"Many years before the period to which I refer, a dangerous malady had reduced the father of Giovanni to the brink of the grave; and the despairing wife had vowed, before her patron saint, that if her husband recovered, she would devote her eldest son to the church.

"The illness terminated favourably; and she prepared to fulfil the duty she had imposed upon herself. Andrea was the name of the youth on which this rigid fortune was entailed, but, happily, his calm, contemplative turn of mind rendered him not unfitted for its endurance.

"While yet a child, he was treated as a chosen vessel; one who was to be an intermediate point between those dear to him and the God he was to serve. The monastic habit was assumed by him ere he had yet quitted the

plays of boyhood; and he met with affectionate indulgence, from the knowledge that he was doomed soon to leave his native village and all that he loved, to live in cloistered solitude at a few miles distance.

"The spires of his convent you may see yonder, signora; but they are more visible at sunset, when the last rays of the bright luminary tinge them. My mother has told me, that often and often did she see Andrea with Vincenza and Giovanni leaning on his shoulders, their arms crossed as they leant on him, pausing to watch those glittering spires fading in the horizon: and the lovers would draw closer to Andrea, reminded by them, that soon he would be torn from them, and he condemned to the solitude of that cloister. How many hopes of affection did they exchange with this dear brother! Andrea, in return, promising to pray for their happiness in his daily orisons before the altar, and in his cell. They dwelt on the visits they should make him; the flowers, fruit, and new honey they would bring him. Giovanni archly adding, in spite of the blushing cheek of Vincenza, which she vainly endeavoured to conceal on the

shoulder of Andrea, that their first-born son should be named Andrea.

"Such was the fascination of this mild and affectionate youth, that his presence was felt to be a source of pleasure instead of a restraint to the lovers. He was scarcely less dear to Vincenza than to Giovanni, and was necessary to the happiness of both. He had now reached his seventeenth year; Giovanni was a year younger —Vincenza had completed her fifteenth birthday. In a few days, Andrea was to enter the convent, and his approaching departure cast a gloom over the hamlet. At this period continued and heavy rain had swollen the Arona; and instead of the blue and limpid stream which you now perceive, it had become a rapid and discoloured flood. A pet lamb, given by Giovanni to Vincenza, had wandered from the hamlet to the banks of the river, into which it unfortunately fell as she approached to secure it. Unmindful of the depth and rapidity of the current, Vincenza rushed in to save her favourite, and was soon carried away by the force of the torrent. She was on the point of sinking, when Andrea arrived at the spot, and threw himself into the river to rescue her. He

seized her by the long tresses that escaped from the bodkin which confined them, and drew her towards the shore; when, overcome by the exertion, and borne down by the weight of the monastic cloak, he was carried away by the current, and sank to rise no more, at the very moment his brother arrived to snatch Vincenza from the arms of death.

"Giovanni would have left his Vincenza (lifeless as she appeared), on the bank, and have rushed into the water to share Andrea's fate; but that he was forcibly withheld by some of the peasants, who, returning from their labour, had arrived in time to witness the catastrophe, and to save Giovanni from suicide. It was many hours ere Vincenza was restored to animation, or that she became sensible of the danger she had escaped; but when returning consciousness brought the fearful scene before her, she scarcely might be said to rejoice in her restoration to an existence that she knew was purchased by the life of Andrea; and throwing herself into the arms of Giovanni, and mingling her tears with his, she prayed him to forgive her for having deprived him of a brother.

"When the lifeless corpse of Andrea was discovered, his clenched hand still grasped a tress of raven hair, which even death itself had failed to compel him to relinquish; and his contracted brow and compressed lips, marked the struggle he had made to save her to whom it had belonged. Bitter were the tears that bedewed his pale forehead, while, bending over him, Vincenza and Giovanni passionately expressed their resolution, ever and fondly to cherish the memory of his virtues and disastrous fate; then, feeling that in losing this dear and trusted brother, one of the links of the chain that united them was broken, they vowed henceforth to be all to each other. Alas! they foresaw not that this terrible affliction, their first in the school of trials, would be the cause of so much future misery, and that their lives, hitherto so tranquil and happy, were never more to know peace.

"No sooner had the mortal remains of Andrea been consigned to the grave, bedewed by the tears of all the village, than the mother declared that Giovanni, her only surviving son, must be devoted to the church in the place of him she had lost. In vain were the tears and

despair of the lovers, rendered now doubly dear to each other by the grief that Andrea's death had caused them,—in vain were the intercessions of relatives, friends, and neighbours,—the superstitious and bigotted mother was resolved on the sacrifice of her child, of whose fate she now became the sole arbitress, in consequence of the death of her husband, which occurred a few days after that of Andrea.

"To his wife, the deceased parent, a weak and good-natured man, and the richest in the village, bequeathed all his wealth; with the chief portion of which, she proclaimed her intention of endowing the convent as soon as Giovanni should pronounce his vows. This declaration enlisted the whole of the monks on her side; and entreaties, representations, and promises having failed to produce any effect on Giovanni, an order was procured from the commandant of a neighbouring town, for a party of military to tear him from the arms of his agonized and despairing Vincenza, and bear him to the convent, where he was kept a close prisoner.

"The deep anguish of Vincenza failed to produce any effect on the obdurate mother of

her lover; nay, the poor girl was looked upon by the inflexible fanatic, as an impious creature, who wanted to place herself between her son and heaven. Vincenza used to sit for hours on a rustic seat that commanded a view of the convent spires; and, when the deepening shades of evening hid them from her sight, she would return pale and silent to her cheerless home, and throw herself on that pillow from which peaceful slumber had now fled for ever.

"The unhappiness of the youthful lovers had thrown a gloom over the whole village; for, though a superstitious dread of the monks had checked the expressions of the sympathy all felt, it had but rendered the feeling more profound. The sounds of the guitar or tambourine were no longer heard to break on the stillness of evening: gloom had succeeded to cheerfulness in the lately happy village, and all was changed. Poor Giovanni had undergone a system of persecution, instigated even less by superstition than by the cupidity of the monks, who wished to ensure the wealth promised by his mother. Coercion had been tried in vain; persuasion, too, had hitherto failed to induce him to repeat the vows that must separate him

for ever from his Vincenza; but when he discovered that on his compliance depended his sole chance of ever again leaving the walls of his convent, he yielded a reluctant and painful assent, and pronounced himself the servant of God, while his heart beat tumultuously with an earthly passion.

"Six additional dreary months were added to those already passed in his monastic prison, ere Giovanni was permitted to pass its guarded portals. Each hour of this period had been counted with bitterness of feeling by Vincenza, who sometimes accused her lover of weakness or inconstancy, in yielding to their separation (unconscious of the persecution he was undergoing), but she still oftener wept their fate; shedding those bitter tears that sear the cheek on which they fall, and refresh not the heart from which they spring.

"The mother of Giovanni was taken dangerously ill, and when her recovery was hopeless, her son was permitted, for the first time, to leave his convent, that he might close her dying eyes. He arrived but in time to perform this filial office; for, in a few minutes after he had entered her chamber, she expired. By

her bedside he found Vincenza, who had nursed her through her malady, and who, worn out by grief and watching by the sick bed, was scarcely to be recognised.

"Those who were in the outer room declared, that for some time they heard convulsive sobs, and deep groans mingled with whispers; and then a *silence* befitting the chamber of death, prevailed. When an hour had elapsed, and not a sound had manifested itself to the attentive ears of the anxious listeners, they entered the room, and to their utter astonishment, found only the lifeless corpse of the mother, the face still wet with the tears of Giovanni and Vincenza. A door, that conducted from the chamber into the garden was open, and evidently indicated the mode of the lovers' escape.

"Whither had they gone? was the question all asked, but none could solve. Could Vincenza, the good, the pure-minded Vincenza, have eloped with a priest? No! so daring an impiety was too dreadful even to be imagined; and yet, how else account for their disappearance?

"The two monks who had been sent to guard

Giovanni from the convent, returned thither to tell the dreadful tale of sacrilege; and their superior despatched emissaries through all the surrounding country, to arrest the unhappy, and as they were termed, impious pair. Still no tidings could be obtained of them; no one had seen—no one had heard, any trace of them. The monks took possession of all that the deceased widow had left; and by their rapacity disgusted all the inhabitants of Galeria.

"Well, signora, various were the conjectures formed on every side, as to the probable fate of the lovers: they were believed to be living in sin together in some distant part of the country; and, truth to say, many people were more inclined to pity than to condemn them.

"Summer had come again; the waters of the Arona had receded from its banks, and some peasants had entered the bed of the river, to obtain gravel for the repair of the road, when their attention was attracted by a dark mass half shrouded by sand. They removed it, and discovered at the very spot where Andrea had perished, the bodies of the lovers locked in each other's arms, and wrapped in the monastic cloak of Giovanni!

"My mother saw them, signora, and she told me that the long tresses of Vincenza were wound round the ill-fated youth, as if to prevent their remains from being separated, even in death.

"They were the last who were ever placed in the cemetery: here, signora, is their grave, the only one preserved free from the weeds and nettles that overgrow the others; for my poor mother performed this humble task while she lived, in memory of their fidelity and misfortunes; and since her death, I have faithfully fulfilled the office.

"The monks, enraged at the pity displayed by the inhabitants of Galeria, pronounced a curse on the village, which so alarmed the natives, that they fled the spot, leaving nearly all their household goods and utensils behind; and this became the Deserted Village."

THE DREAM.

"AND ye love him still, Kathleen?"

"Faix and I do; sore against my will, too, sometimes: but troth, mavourneen, for the life of me I can't help it."

"Yet, sure, haven't ye tould me, that he's as cross as may be, when he hasn't the dhrop of dhrink, and as cross as *can* be, when he has it, that he neglicts the childer, and snaps his fingers in ye'r face, when you want to keep him from the Dun Cow; and afther all this ye love him? Well, for my part, I'm but a lone woman, to be sure, and never knew what it was—God be praised!—to have a man on my own floor, houlding out against me, ever since I lost my poor father—pace be to his sowl!—last Christmas was eleven years; but I think I could no

more bear with such traitment as you put up with, Kathleen, then I could fly."

"Aragh cuisla machree; it is *because* you've been a lone woman, and have not been used to have a man on your floor, houlding out against you, that it seems so hard to bear. One gets used to every thing in the course of time; and many is the thing that seemed disagreeable enough at first, that has come so pleasant at last, that sure one has got to like it."

"That's what my poor ould granny used to say, in regard to the snuff. 'When I used to take a snisheen at first,' said she, (may the heavens be her bed this blessed night!) 'I didn't like it much; but afther I had taken it for some time, faix I got used to it, and liked it; and many's the lonesome hour it has helped me over.'"

"Well, thin, so it is with a husband's ways; one feels a saucy word, or an impudent shake of the head, just ready to answer him, but if one has the luck to keep in both, faix 'twill be a great blessing."

"But how did ye find out the craft to keep 'em in, Kathleen? For, troth, they come so quick to me, whinever I'm vexed, that off they go, whether I will or no."

"Well, then, Pegg asthore, I'll tell you how it all happened. Though as 'twas only a dhream, a simple dhream, mayhap you'll not think so seriously of it as I did. But dhreams come direct from heaven! bekase, as they appear to us when we are asleep, and can't help ourselves, it's clear that God, who always purtects the helpless, sends 'em to us."

"Then faix, Kathleen, it's yerself that's the quare woman to be believing in dhreams? But tell me what it was you dhreamt, avourneen."

"'Twas a fine summer evening, Peggy; as ever shone out of the heavens. The bees were flitting about from flower to flower, and saying, with their playsant voices, 'What a sweet life we lade!' The birds were singing such music, that those who had once listened to it with the ears of their hearts, wants no better. And the red sun was going to bed, behind purple curtains, fringed with goold, richer than any king's, when I sat at the open window,—that same window, Peggy, that you now see. The sweet smell of the flowers came to me; the brown cuckoo hopped over the field, and repeated his cry as clear as could be; the cows lowed in the distance, and every bird and baste,—ay, and the little tiny crathurs, that are

smaller than the birds, might be heard too—all was so still and calm. Oh! in such summer-nights, one may hear the voice of Heaven, if one keeps one's mind quiet, and looks up to God! But my mind—God forgive me!—was'nt quiet, for I was vexed and angry. 'Well,' says I to myself, 'here I am, this beautiful night, and Andy promised he would come home before the sun had gone to bed, and there he has drawn his purple curtains, and put out his blessed light, and yet the man of the house does not come to me! Sure, 'tis to the Dun Cow he's gone, to dhrink with them limbs of the devil; and this is the way that a poor woman is kept, like a *mhoodaun*,* watching the long hours, while he's spending the trifle he's airn'd!' With that, up gets the anger in my breast, and the heart of me began to bait, and my cheeks got as hot as a lime-kiln. 'I'll go after him,' says I, 'to the Dun Cow, and give him a bit of my mind, that I will!' But then I begun to remember that Biddy Phelan used to go after Mick, her husband, until he got so used to it, that he would say he couldn't go till Biddy came for him; and I said to myself, 'It shall never be said, that I, a dacent girl, wint afther my

* A fool.

husband to a shibeen shop.' 'But, thin, 'twould sârve him right, and may be teach him bether,' whispered the Evil Spirit in my ears, 'if you were to spake to him afore the wild boys he's dhrinking with;' and I up, and threw the tail of my gound over my shoulders, and crossed the treshold. 'If he should speak crossly to you, Kathleen, before all them chaps, would'nt it be a terrible downfal to ye?' said a little voice in my heart, no louder than the humming of a bee. 'Faith, 'tis yerself that's right enough,' said I; and I let down the tail of my gound, and begun to cry like a child. Well, I cried till I fell fast asleep; for, though people say that sleep seldomer comes to the eyes that have been shedding tears, I have always found the contrary; and I remember the last thought I had afore I slept was, What a baste my husband was to lave me alone, while he was spending his airnings at the Dun Cow! I slept, and I dhreamt that I was so angry with him, that I prayed to God to take him to himself, for that I'd rather lave him intirely, than have him laving me to go to the Dun Cow to throw away his money. 'Well, you shall have your will, honest woman,' says Death to me; 'but remember, that once I have granted your prayer,

you'll never see your husband again, except a corpse.' With that I saw my poor boy laid in his bed, *our bed*, where we spent many a blessed night. His face was as pale as marble, Peggy, when the moon is shining out in the church-yard. His hair was like the boughs of the willow, wet and drooping with the heavy dews of night; and his lips were cold and silent as the grave. Oh, God! I shall never forget what I felt, when I looked at him in that moment. I threw my arms round him—my hot tears drenched his frozen face—I called him by every tender name—but he answered me not, he heeded me not. The memory of all our love—the happy hours of our courtship—and the more happy ones when I first stood on his floor as a bride, came back to me; and I thought I had never really truly loved him before, as I now did. And there he lay, with that beauty on his pale and lifeless face, that Death gives when he has struck the blow, just as if he wished to make us more sorrowful for what we have lost. I thried all I could to remember how often my poor boy had vexed me, in the hopes of its stopping my grief; but would you believe it, Peggy? I could call to mind nothing but all the fond words and the loving actions of him, until my

very heart seemed breaking, and I prayed to God either to restore *him* to life, or to take me with him. 'Remember, woman,' said a voice, that sounded like the wind when it comes sighing through a wood, when first the leaves begin to fall, 'remember that I tould you, if oncest I granted your prayer for his death, you should never see him again but as a corpse. I'm thinking 'tis yerself that's sorry enough for your wickedness in wishing for his death; but it's too late now. You couldn't bear to lose him for an hour or two at the Dun Cow, but now you must lose him for ever and a day. You'll see his plaisant smile no more, nor hear his loving voice. 'Andy, Andy, cuishla machree, don't lave me! don't lave me!' cried I, like one that had lost all raison, and the big tears running down my cheeks!' 'Faith, and I won't, my darlint,' said a voice, the sound of which I never expected to hear again in this world. 'Sure, here I am, my *colleen dhas*;' and he hugged me against his warm heart, for it was no other than Andy himself that had come home from the Dun Cow, and all the throuble I was in about his death was a dhream. From that night I have never scoulded him, nor said a cross word about his going to the

Dun Cow; for whenever an angry thought was coming into my head, I remembered my dhream, and thanked God he wasn't dead."

"Oh, Peggy, dear! Such warnings as that are blessed things, and teach us to bare and forbare. Praise be to *His* holy name who sends 'em!"

THE HONEYMOON.

"Some persons pay for a month of honey with a life of vinegar."

Novels and comedies end generally with a marriage, because, after that event it is supposed that nothing remains to be told.

This supposition is erroneous, as the history of many a wedded pair might exemplify; for how many hearts have fallen away from their allegiance, after hands have been joined by the saffron-robed god, which had remained true, while suffering all the pangs that from time immemorial have attended the progress of the archer-boy?

Passion—possession—what a history is comprised in these two words! But how often might its moral be conveyed in a third—indifference?

Marriage, we are told, is the portal, where

Love resigns his votaries to the dominion of sober Reason; but, alas! many have so little predilection for his empire, that they rather endeavour to retain the illusions of the past, gone for ever, than to be content with the reality in their power.

During the days of courtship, the objects beloved are viewed through a magic mirror which gives only perfections to the sight; but after marriage, a magnifying glass stands to supply its place, which draws objects so unpleasingly near, that even the most trivial defects are made prominent.

Courtship is a dream—marriage the time of awaking;—fortunate are they who can lay aside their visions for the more common-place happiness of life, without disappointment or repining.

The hero and heroine of our sketch were not of these; they had loved passionately—wildly. Their parents had, from motives of prudence, opposed their union, considering them as too young to enter a state which requires more widsom to render it one of happiness, than most of its votaries are disposed to admit.

This opposition produced its natural result,

an increase of violence in the passion of the lovers. Henri de Bellevalle was ready to commit any action, however rash, to secure the hand of Hermance de Montesquieu, and she did all that a well brought up young French lady could be expected to do,—she fell dangerously ill. Her illness and danger drove her lover to desperation, while it worked so effectually on the fears of her parents, that they yielded a reluctant consent to the marriage, which was to be solemnized the moment that she was restored to health. The first interview between the lovers was truly touching: both declared they must have died had their marriage not been agreed to, and both firmly believed what they asserted.

Henri de Bellevalle being now received as the future husband of Hermance, passed nearly the whole of his time with her, seated by the *chaise-longue* of the convalescent, marking, with delight, the return of health's roses to her delicate cheek, and promising her unchanging, devoted, eternal love.

"Yes, dearest Hermance," would he say, "Hermance, you are mine, *wholly* mine! I shall have no will but yours, never shall I quit your presence. Oh! how tormenting it is to

be forced to leave you, to be told by your mother that I fatigue you by the length of my visits, and to be absent from you so many long and heavy hours. And you, Hermance, do you feel as I do?—do you mourn my absence, and count with impatience the hour for our meeting?"

The answer may be guessed; yet though tender as youthful and loving lips could utter, it scarcely satisfied the jealous and *exigeant* lover.

"But will you always love me as at present?" asked the timid girl. "I have *heard* such strange tales of the difference between the lover and the husband; nay, indeed, I have *seen*; for the Vicomte de Belmonte *now* leaves my poor friend Elise for whole hours, yet you may remember that before *they* were married, he, too, would hardly bear to be absent from her side. Ah! were *you* to change like him, I should be wretched."

"You wrong yourself and me, my adored Hermance, by supposing me capable of acting like De Belmonte; and, besides, your poor friend, though a very charming person, does not resemble *you*. Ah! what woman ever did? If she only possessed one half your charms he

could not tear himself away from her. No! dearest; years shall only prove that my passion for you can know no change, and never, never shall the husband be less ardent than the lover! I have planned all our future life: it shall pass as a summer day—bright and genial. We will retire from Paris, which I have hated ever since I loved you; its noise, its tumultuous pleasures distract me. I could not bear to see you gazed at, followed, and admired, No! I feel, my Hermance, that it would drive me mad. But you, my beloved, will you not sigh to leave the pleasures of the metropolis, and to exchange a crowd of admirers for one devoted heart?"

"How can you ask such a question?" replied Hermance, pouting her pretty lip, and placing her little white hand within his; "I shall be delighted to leave Paris; for I could not bear to see you talking to the Duchesse de Monforte, and a dozen other women, as you used to do when I first knew you; and when all my young friends used to remark, how strange it was that the married women occupied the attention of the young men so much, that they scarcely took any notice of us spinsters. I should be very jealous, Henri, I can tell you, were you

to show more than distant politeness to any woman but me."

And her smooth brow became for a moment contracted, at the recollection of his former publicly marked attentions to certain ladies of fashion.

The little white hand was repeatedly pressed to his lips, as he assured her again and again, that it would become irksome to him to be compelled to converse with any woman but herself; and her brow resumed its former unruffled calmness.

"I have taken the most beautiful cottage orné at Bellevue; it is now fitting up by Le Sage, as if to receive a fairy queen. *Such* a boudoir! how you will like it! We will walk, ride, drive, read, draw, and sing together—in short, we shall never be a moment asunder; but perhaps, Hermance, you will get tired of me?

"How cruel, how unjust to suppose it possible!" was the answer.

In such day-dreams did the hours of convalescence of the fair invalid pass away, interrupted only by the pleasant task of examining and selecting the various articles for the *trousseau*,

rendered all the pleasanter by the impassioned compliments of the lover, who declared that while each and all were most becoming, they still borrowed their best grace from her whom they were permitted to adorn.

He taught her to look forward to wedlock as a state of uninterrupted happiness, where love was for ever to bestow his sunny smiles, and never to spread his wings. They were to be free from all the ills to which poor human nature is subject. Sorrow or sickness they dreamt not of; and even *ennui*, that most alarming of all the evils in a French man or woman's catalogue, they feared not; for how could it reach two people who had such a delightful and inexhaustible subject of conversation as was offered by *themselves*.

At length the happy morn arrived; and after the celebration of the marriage, the wedded pair, contrary to all established usage in France on similar occasions, left Paris and retired to the cottage orné at Bellevue.

The first few days of bridal felicity, marked by delicate and engrossing attentions, and delicious flatteries, flew quickly by; reiterated declarations of perfect happiness were daily, hourly exchanged; and the occasional inter-

ruptions to their *tête-à-tête*, offered by the visits of friends, was found to be the only drawback to their enjoyment.

After the lapse of a week, however, our wedded lovers became a little more sensible to the claims of friendship. Fewer confidential glances were now exchanged between them, expressive of their impatience at the lengthened visits of their acquaintances; they began to listen with something like interest to the gossip of Paris, and not unfrequently extended their hospitality to those who were inclined to accept it. In short, they evinced slight symptoms of a desire to enter again into society, though they declared to each other that this change arose from their wish not to appear unkind, or ill-bred, to their acquaintances. They even found that such casual interruptions served to give a new zest to the delights of their *tête-à-têtes*. Yet each marked, in secret, that "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream;" and that when no visitors dropped in, the days seemed unusually long and monotonous. —*They* were ashamed to acknowledge this alteration, and endeavoured to conceal their feelings by increased demonstrations of affection, but the forced smiles of both, insensibly

extended to yawns; and they began to discover that there must be something peculiarly heavy in the atmosphere to produce such effects.

When they drove, or rode out, they no longer sought the secluded wooded lanes in the romantic neighbourhood, as they had invariably done during the first ten days of their marriage, but kept on the high road or the frequented one in the Bois-de-Boulogne. Hermance observed, with a sigh, that Henri not unfrequently turned his head to observe some fair equestrian who galloped by them, and Henri discovered, with some feeling allied to pique, that Hermance had eyes for every distinguished looking cavalier whom they encountered;—though to be sure it was but a transient glance that she bestowed on them. Each was aware that the change equally operated on both; but neither felt disposed to pardon it in the other. Hermance most felt it; for though conscious of her own desire to see and be seen again, she was deeply offended that her husband betrayed the same predilection for society. They became silent and abstracted.

"I am sure," would Hermance say to herself, "he is now regretting the gaieties of Paris; and this fickleness after only two weeks of

marriage! It is too bad; but men are shocking creatures!—yet, I must own, Paris is much more agreeable than Bellevue. Heigh-ho! I wish we were back there. How I long to show my beautiful dresses and my pearls at the *soirées!*—and when Henri sees me, admired as I am sure I shall be, he will become as attentive and as amusing as he used to be. Yes! Paris is the only place where lovers are kept on the *qui vive* by a constant round of gaieties, instead of sinking into a state of apathy, by being left continually dependent on each other."

While these reflections were passing in the mind of Hermance, Henri was thinking it was very strange that she no longer amused or interested him so much as a few weeks before.

"Here am I," he would say to himself, "shut up in this retirement, away from all my occupations and amusements, leading nearly as effeminate a life as Achilles at Syros, devoting all my time to Hermance; and yet she does not seem sensible of the sacrifice I am making. Women are very selfish creatures: there she is, as abstracted as if two years had elapsed since our marriage, instead of two weeks; and I dare be sworn, wishing herself back at Paris

to display her *trousseau*, and be admired.—This fickleness is too bad! but women are all the same. I wish we were back at Paris; I wonder if they miss me much at the club?"

Henri no longer flatteringly applauded the *toilette* of Hermance, a want of attention which no woman, and least of all, a French woman, is disposed to pardon.

He could now (and the reflection wounded her self-love), doze comfortably while she sung one of his favourite songs—songs which only a few days before, called forth his most passionate plaudits.

He no longer dwelt in rapturous terms on her beauty; and she, consequently, could not utter the blushing yet gratified disclaimers to such compliments, or return them by similar ones. No wonder then, that their conversation having lost its chief charm, was no longer kept up with spirit, but sunk into common-place observations.

"Yes!" Hermance would mentally own, "he is changed—cruelly changed."

She was forced to admit, that he was still kind, gentle, and affectionate; but was kindness, gentleness, and affection, sufficient to supply the place of the rapturous romantic

felicity she had anticipated? No! Hermance felt they were not, and pique mingled with her disappointment. These reflections would fill her eyes with tears; and a certain degree of reserve was assumed towards Henri, that tended not to impart animation to his languid, yet invariably affectionate attentions.

Each day made Henri feel, still more forcibly, the want of occupation. He longed for a gallop, a day's hunting, or shooting; in short, for any manly amusement to be partaken of with some of his former companions.

Hercules plying the distaff could not be more out of his natural element, than our new married benedict, shut up for whole hours in the luxurious boudoir of his wife; or sauntering round and round again through the pretty, but confined pleasure ground which encircled his cottage. It is true, he could ride out with Hermance, but then she was so timid an equestrian, that a gallop was a feat of horsemanship she dared not essay; and to leave her with his groom while *he* galloped would be uncivil.—After they had strolled, arm-in-arm, the usual number of turns in the pleasure-ground, repeated nearly the same observations, that the flowers, weather, and points of view, had so

frequently elicited,—looked at their watches and were surprised to find it was not yet time to dress for dinner. At length that hour arrived, regarded by some as the happiest of the twenty-four; and our wedded pair, found themselves at the table, with better appetites and less sentiment than lovers are supposed to possess. In short, the stomach seemed more alive than the heart—a fact which rather astonished the delicacy of the gentle Hermance.

During the first few bridal days, their servants had been dismissed from attendance in the *salle-à-manger*, because their presence was deemed a restraint. Besides, Henri liked to help Hermance himself, without the intervention of a servant; and with the assistance of dumb-waiters, their *tête-à-tête* dinners had passed off, as they said, deliciously.

In the course of a fortnight, however, they required so many little acts of attendance, that it was deemed expedient to dismiss the dumb-waiters, and call in the aid of their living substitutes.

"How tiresome it is of our cook," said Henri, "to give us the same *potage* continually."

"Did you not examine the *menu?*" replied Hermance.

"I scarcely looked at it," was the answer, "for I hate ordering dinners; or, in truth, knowing what I am to have at that repast until I see it, and here, I vow (as the servant uncovered the *entrées*), are the eternal *côtelettes-d'agneau* and *filets-de-volaille*, which we have so often, that I am fatigued with seeing them."

"Do you not remember, *cher ami*," said Hermance, "that you told me you liked *soupe-au-riz* better than any other, and that the *entrées* now before us, are precisely those which you said you preferred?"

"Did I, love?" replied Henri, with an air of nonchalance; "well, then, the fact is, we have had them so frequently of late, that I am tired of them; one tires of every thing after a time."

A deeper tint on the cheek of Hermance, and a tear which trembled in her eye, might have told Henri that his last observation had given rise to some painful reflections in her mind. But, alas! both blush and tear were unnoticed by him, as he was busily engaged in discussing the *filets-de-volaille*.

"You do not eat, dear Hermance," said Henri at length, having done ample justice to

the decried *entrées.* "Let me give you a little of this *rôti*, it is very tender."

"It is only more unfortunate for that,"* replied Hermance, with a deep sigh; "but I cannot eat;" and with difficulty she suppressed the tears that filled her eyes, while a smile stole over the lips of her husband at her sentimental reproach.

Hermance felt hurt at the smile, and offended at observing that Henri continued to partake as copiously of the *rôti* as he had previously done of the *entrées.* How unfeeling, how indelicate to continue to devour, when *she* had refused to eat!

As soon as dinner was concluded, and the servants had withdrawn, Henri remarked, for the first time, that the eyes of his wife were dimmed with tears.

"How is this, dearest!" exclaimed he,—"you have been weeping—are you ill?" and he attempted to take her hand, but it was withdrawn, and her face averted, while she applied her handkerchief to her gushing eyes, and wept with uncontrolled emotion. "Speak to me, I

* The words used by a French lady to her husband on a similar occasion.

beseech you, Hermance!" continued Henri, endeavouring again to take her hand; "how have I offended you?"

"I see it, I see it all, but too plainly," sobbed the weeping Hermance; "you no longer love me! I have observed your growing indifference day after day, and tried not to believe the cruel change; but now,"—and here her tears streamed afresh—"I can no longer doubt your fickle nature, when I hear you avow that you get tired of every thing—which means every person—and this to me, who, only a few weeks ago, you professed to adore! Oh! it is too cruel! why did I marry?" and here sobs interrupted her words.

"You wrong me! indeed you do, dear Hermance; I said one tires of things; but I never said, or meant that one gets tired of persons. Come, this is childish; let me wipe these poor eyes," and he kissed her brow while gently performing the operation.

"Then why have you seemed so different of late?" sobbed Hermance, letting him now retain the hand he pressed to his lips.

"In what has the difference consisted, dear love?" asked Henri.

"You no longer seem delighted when I enter the room, or join you in the garden, after being absent half an hour.

"*Half* an hour!" reiterated Henri, with a faint smile.

"Yes! a *whole* half hour," replied Hermance, placing an emphasis on the word "whole." "You used to appear enchanted when I came into the saloon at Paris, and always flew to meet me. You never admire my dress now, though you were wont to examine and commend all that I wore; and you doze while I am singing the songs, which a few weeks ago threw you into ecstasies."

Poor Hermance wept afresh at the recapitulation of the symptoms of her husband's growing indifference, while he soothed her with loving words and tender epithets.

Having in some measure reassured her by his affectionate manner, harmony was again established; but the veil was removed from the eyes of both, never again to be resumed.

They perceived that the love—unceasing, ecstatic—of which they had dreamt before their union, was a chimera existing only in imagination; and they awoke with sobered feelings, to seek content in rational affection, instead of

indulging in romantic expectations of a happiness that never falls to the lot of human beings; each acknowledging, with a sigh, that even in a marriage of love, the brilliant anticipations of imagination are never realized; that disappointment awaits poor mortals even in that brightest portion of existence—the Honeymoon.

MARY LESTER;

A TALE OF ERROR.



"Quel vago impallider che'l dolce riso
D'un amorsa nebbia ricoverse."—*Petrarch.*

"One lovely bush of the pale virgin thorn,
Bent o'er a little heap of lowly turf,
Is all the sad memorial of her worth—
All that remains to mark where she is laid."
Joanna Baillie's "Rayner."

It was a lovely evening in the early part of August, 1827, when a brilliant sun was sinking in the horizon, and tinging all round with his golden beams, that a travelling carriage and four was seen rapidly descending a hill on the north road. In the carriage, supported by pillows, reclined a young man, on whose high brow and noble countenance disease had stamped its seal in fearful characters, though the natural

beauty of the sufferer still shone forth triumphantly over the ravages of ill health. His languid head rested on the shoulder of a young and beautiful girl, and his upturned eyes were fixed, with an expression of unutterable love, on hers. The last rosy rays of sunset, falling on the pale brow of the young man, shewed like a red cloud passing over snow, and contrasted sadly with its marble hue.

"Mary, my blessed love," said the invalid, "pull the check-string, and order Sainville to urge the postillions to advance still quicker."

"Be composed, dearest Henry," replied the young lady; "observe you not that the velocity with which we advance has increased the difficulty of your breathing? You will destroy yourself by this exertion."

"Mary, you know not how essential it is to my peace of mind that we should reach Gretna Green most rapidly; every moment is precious, and the anxiety that preys on me is even still more fatal to my frame than the velocity of our pace. Tell Sainville then, dearest, to urge the postillions."

Mary pulled the check-string, and Sainville soon stopped the carriage, and stood by the step. The change that the last hour had pro-

duced on the countenance of his master struck the servant with dismay; and he almost feared he should see him expire, as, gasping for breath, he turned his eager eyes on those of Sainville, and laying his hand on the arm of the alarmed servant, said, "Remember, Sainville, that my life—nay, more than life, depends on my reaching Gretna Green in a few hours. Give the postillions gold—promise them all, every thing, if they will advance with all possible speed."

The postillions urged their steeds, and the carriage whirled along with fearful rapidity, while the invalid pressed with a nervous grasp the small trembling hand that rested within his.

Who were this young and interesting pair, at whose dreams of love and happiness the gaunt fiend Death smiled in mockery, while he held his dart suspended over them? To tell you who they were, it is necessary to return to the village of Dawlish, in Devonshire, where dwelt Mrs. Lester, the widow of a field-officer, who was killed at the battle of Waterloo; and who left his still young and beautiful wife, with an infant daughter, a scanty provision, and little else, save the distinguished reputation that his well-known bravery had gained in a life devoted

to the service of his country, and sealed by his blood.

Colonel Lester's had been a love marriage; but, unlike the generality of such unions, the love had increased with the years that had united them; and they felt so happy as nearly to forget that their marriage had deprived them of the affection and countenance of their mutual relatives, who had declined all intercourse with two poor and wilful persons, as they considered them, who were determined to marry from pure affection, contrary to the advice of all their friends. It was not until death had snatched her husband from her, that Mrs. Lester felt the consequences of her imprudent marriage. Left alone and unprotected, with an infant daughter, how did she wish to claim for her child that protection from her family for which she was too proud to sue for herself! And it was not without many struggles with her pride that she had appealed to their sympathy. This appeal had been unanswered; for the relatives to whom it had been addressed found it still more prudent to decline an intercourse with an ill-provided widow, than it had formerly been to renew one with the happy wife of a meritorious officer, likely to arrive at distinction in his profession.

Mrs. Lester retired from the busy world, and fixed her residence in a small neat cottage at Dawlish, determined to devote her whole time to the education of her child. This spot had been endeared to her by her having spent some of the happiest days of her life there, with Colonel Lester soon after her marriage; and she found a melancholy pleasure in tracing their former haunts in its neighbourhood, when, leaning on his arm, and supported by his affection, the future offered only bright prospects. All the love she had felt for her husband was now centred in his child; and the youthful Mary grew, beneath a mother's tender and fostering care, all that the fondest parent could desire—lovely in person, and pure in mind.

She had only reached her sixteenth year, when, in the summer of 1827, the young Lord Mordaunt came to Dawlish, to try the benefit of change of air in a complaint which threatened to terminate in consumption. The cottage next to Mrs. Lester's was taken for the invalid; and his physician having occasion to refer to that lady for the character of a female servant, an acquaintance was formed that led to an introduction to his patient, who found the society of the mother and daughter so much to his taste,

that no day passed that did not find him a visitor at Woodbine Cottage. He would spend whole hours by the drawing or work-table of Mary, correcting her sketches, reading aloud to her, or giving descriptions of the different foreign countries he had visited.

Lord Mordaunt was a young man so attractive in person and manners, that it would have been difficult for a much more fastidious judge than Mary Lester, not to have been captivated by his attentions; and his delicate health served still more to excite a strong interest for him, while it banished all thoughts of alarm, even from the breast of the prudent mother, who looked on him with sorrow, as one foredoomed to an early grave. It is perhaps one of the most amiable proofs of the tenderness of women's hearts—their sympathy and affection, which health and gaiety might fail to produce. The power was exemplified in the conduct of Mary Lester; for when, in their daily walks, in which Lord Mordaunt now attended them, his pale cheek assumed a hectic hue, from the exertion, and his eyes beamed with more than their usual lustre, those of Mary would fill with tears as she marked the first precursors of decay. With trembling

anxiety she would urge him to repose himself on some rustic bench; and when he yielded to her entreaties, would hang over him with feelings, of whose source and extent her innocence kept her in ignorance, or led her to attribute solely to pity.

Days passed away, each one increasing the attachment of the young people, and confirming the fears of Lord Mordaunt's physcian, while he alone appeared unconscious of his danger. His passion seemed to bind him by new ties of life; and when pain and lassitude reminded him that he was ill, he looked on the blooming cheek and beaming eye of Mary, and asked himself—if one, who felt for her the love that quickened the pulsations of his throbbing heart, could be indeed approaching the cold and cheerless grave? and he clung with renewed hope to existence, now that it had become so valuable.

At this period, a sprained ancle confined Mrs. Lester to the house; and she confided Mary every day to the care of Dr. Erskine and his patient, to pursue their accustomed walk. The doctor was skilled in botany and geology, and the neighbourhood of Dawlish presented many specimens in both sciences capable of arresting his attention; hence the lovers were

frequently left alone in their rambles while he collected treasures for his *hortus siccus*, or cabinet; and the conversation, which, under the eye of the dignified matron, or grave doctor, had always been confined to general topics, now became purely personal. When young people begin to talk of themselves, sentiment soon colours the conversation; and, from sentimental conversation to love, how quick is the transition! When Lord Mordaunt first avowed his passion, the pure and heartless Mary's innocent reply was, "O! how happy dear mamma will be!" But a cloud that passed over the brow of her lover, shewed that he anticipated not the same effect on Mrs. Lester.

"Do not dearest, if you value my peace," said he, "inform your mother of our attachment. My family would oppose it so strongly, that she would think herself obliged to refuse her sanction—nay, she would I am sure, think it her duty to prohibit our meeting. A separation from you I could not support; and but one mode awaits us to avert it. Fly with me, my beloved Mary, to Scotland; our marriage once accomplished, my family must be reconciled to it—at least, they cannot divide us;

and your mother will be saved the blame of having aided it."

Day after day, the same reasoning was tried by the impassioned lover, and listened to with less reluctance by the too confiding girl; and as she heard the tender reproaches he uttered, and his reiterated avowals of his increasing illness, caused, as he asserted, by the anxiety that preyed on his mind at her hesitating to elope with him, and marked the growing delicacy of his appearance, her scruples and fears vanished, and, in an evil hour, she left the happy home of her childhood, and the unsuspecting mother who idolized her. A thousand pangs shot through the heart of this innocent and hitherto dutiful daughter, as she prepared to leave the peaceful roof that had sheltered her infancy. She paused at the chamber door of her sleeping parent, and called down blessings on her head, and was only sustained in her resolution to accompany her lover, by the recollection she was to confer happiness—nay, life, on him, and, that a few days would see her return to her mother, the happy wife of Lord Mordaunt.

It is the happiness they believe they are to confer, and not that which they hope to receive,

that influences the conduct of women; and many a one has fallen a victim to generous affection, who could have resisted the pleadings of selfishness. At the moment of leaving her home, Mary thought only of others: her lover and her mother occupied all her thoughts, and never, perhaps, did she more truly love that mother, than when unconsciously planting a dagger in her heart, by the step she was about to take. Never let the young and unsuspecting do evil, in order that good may ensue. Mary knew that she was about to do wrong; but she was persuaded by her lover, that it was the only possible means of securing their future happiness; and she yielded to the temptation.

The valet of Lord Mordaunt, who was in the confidence of his master, made all the necessary arrangements for the elopement; and the lovers left the village of Dawlish while the unsuspicious mother and Dr. Erskine soundly slept, unthinking of the rash step the persons so dear to them were taking.

They had only pursued their route one day and night, when the rupture of the blood-vessel in the chest wrought so fearful a change in Lord Mordaunt, that he became sensible of

his danger, and trembled at the idea of dying before he could bequeath his name to his adored Mary. His whole soul was now bent on fulfilling this duty; but, alas! the very anxiety that preyed on him only rendered its accomplishment more difficult. Still he proceeded, resisting all Mary's entreaties to stop to repose himself, and was within a few stages of his destination;—no post-horses were to be had, and the agonies of disappointed hope were now added to the mortal pangs that shot through the frame of the dying man. He was removed from his carriage and laid on a couch, while the agonized girl bent over him in speechless woe.

"Remember, Sainville," murmured Mordaunt, in broken accents, "that this lady would have been my wife, had life been spared me to reach Gretna. Tell my father and mother that it was I who urged,—who forced her to this flight, and to look on her as their daughter."

Here agitation overpowered his feeble frame, and he sunk fainting on his pillow, from whence he never moved again, as death, in a few hours, closed his mortal sufferings. The hapless Mary stayed by him while a spark of life yet lingered;

but when the hand that grasped hers relaxed its hold, she fell in a swoon nearly as cold and rigid as the corpse beside her. For many days a violent fever rendered her insensible to the miseries of her situation. During her delirium she repeatedly called on her mother and lover to save her from some imagined enemy who was forcing her from them, and the mistress of the inn, and the chamber maids who assisted her, were melted into tears by the pathos of her incoherent complaints.

Intelligence of the death of Lord Mordaunt had been dispatched to Mordaunt Castle, the seat of his father, and in due time, the confidential agent of his lordship, accompanied by a London undertaker, arrived to perform the funeral obsequies.

Youth and good constitution had enabled Mary to triumph over her malady; and, though reduced to extreme languor, reason once more resumed its empire over her brain; but, with returning consciousness, came the fearful heart-rending recollection of the death-scene she had witnessed, and she shrunk, with morbid distaste, from a life that now no longer offered her a single charm. Her entreaties won from the humane mistress an avowal that the mortal

remains of him she had loved were to be removed for interment the following day, and she insisted upon looking at them once again. It was evening when, pale and attenuated, presenting only the shadow of her former self, Mary Lester, supported by the pitying females who had watched over her illness, entered the chamber of death. Her eyes fell on the marble brow and finely chiselled features of Lord Mordaunt, beautiful even in death, and an involuntary shudder betrayed her feelings. She motioned to be left alone, and there was an earnestness and calmness in the looks and gestures that pleaded for this last indulgence, that rendered a compliance with it irresistible. She looked at the face so beloved, every lineament of which was graven in ineffaceable characters on her heart,—that face which never before met her glance without repaying it with one of unutterable tenderness. While she yet gazed in mute despair, and tears, nature's kind relief, were denied to her burning eyes, the last rays of the sun, setting in brilliant splendour, fell on the calm countenance of her lover, tinging its marble paleness with faint red.

"It was thus, Henry, you looked when I last saw the sun's dying beams fall on your

beautiful brow," ejaculated the heart-broken girl; "ah, no! for then those lovely eyes, now for ever veiled in death, sought mine with looks of deep, deep love, and silenced the reproaches of the monitor within my breast. But now, O God of mercy! who shall silence it, or who shall speak comfort to me? Look at me once again. Henry, adored Henry! let me once more hear the blessed sound of that voice!" and she paused, as if awaiting the result of her passionate invocation. Then, turning away, "Fool! senseless fool that I am!" she exclaimed, "he heeds me not! he has fled for ever! and I am alone—alone, for evermore—in a world that can never again hold forth a single illusion to me. O mother! dear dear mother! and was it for this I deserted you? I thought to return to you a proud and happy bride, and that *he* would plead, successfully plead, for your pardon for my first fault. But there he lies, who should have pleaded, cold and speechless, and I live to see him so lie. Henry! beloved Henry! thy lips have never yet pressed mine; pure and respectful love restrained each ardent impulse, and in thy devoted attachment I found my best shield. But now, now, when thine can no longer return the pressure, O! let me

thus imprint the first seal of love!" and she pressed her pale and trembling lips to the cold and rigid ones of Mordaunt, and fainted in the action.

It was long ere the kind exertions of the women, who rushed in from the adjoining room on hearing her fall, could restore animation to the exhausted frame of Mary; and when they succeeded, the first sentences that struck on her ears were the following dialogue between Mr. Sable, the undertaker, and Sainville.

"Je vous dit, dat is I tell you, Monsieur Sable, dat cet demoiselle, dis young lady, vas to be de lady, c'est à dire, l'épouse—de vife of my lord. He cannot tell you so himself, parcequ'il est mort, for he be dead; but I do tell to you vat he did tell to me with his last words."

"Why, you see, Mr. Sainville," replied the obtuse Sable, "I cannot outstep my orders; and the affair has a very awkward appearance, to say the least of it. A portionless young lady, as I understood her to be, eloping with a rich young nobleman of splendid expectations, and in the last stage of consumption—why, look you, it has a very suspicious aspect. The marquis is a very stern and severe nobleman,

and the marchioness is as proud as Lucifer; neither would for a moment countenance a young person who had no legitimate claims on their consideration, and whom they would naturally look on as an artful adventuress, who had taken advantage of the weakness and partiality of their son to entrap him into an engagement which, luckily, he did not live to complete. Mr. Scruple, the lawyer, has explained all this to me; and therefore, neither he nor I can interfere in making any arrangements for the return of the young person to her friends; and as to her accompanying the funeral procession to Mordaunt Castle, it is out of the question."

"And dis you call religion and humanity in dis country?" said the angry Sainville, "had my dear young lord lived three hours longer, cette jeune et charmante demoiselle, dat is, dis young lady and pretty lady, would have been Miladi Mordaunt, and Monsieur Scruple and yourself vould have bowed de knees to her with great respect. De marquis and de marchioness must den have treated her as la veuve—de vidow of deir son, and all homage and honours vould be given to her; but now dat she vants every ting, you give her notings, and my dear dead lord's last words go for noting at all, except

vith me; but I will not desert her who vas so loved by my dear lost master. I vill attend her to her home."

Here a burst of tears interrupted the angry tirade of poor Sainville, who only *felt*, while Sable reasoned. But what were the feelings of Mary at this coarse *exposé* of her position! She was ready to sink into the earth; and, for a moment forgetting how useless was the measure, she ran to the bed where lay the inanimate corpse of *him* who once would have shielded her from even the approach of the semblance of insult, and throwing herself on the lifeless body, called on Henry, her dear Henry, to protect and save her, and to vindicate her suspected purity.

A return of fever and delirium kept the unfortunate Mary many days on the brink of the grave, and those around her thought that each hour must terminate at once her life and sufferings. When consciousness again returned to her, she found that Sainville, the faithful servant of Lord Mordaunt, having performed the last melancholy duties to the mortal remains of his loved master, had returned to offer his services to conduct her to her mother. She thankfully accepted them; and when able to

bear the motion of a carriage, Sainville, having secured the attendance of one of the women who had nursed her in her illness, placed her, propped by pillows in the most comfortable chaise he could procure, and slowly retraced the route they had so lately pursued under such different circumstances. Mary's agonized thoughts dwelt on the sad contrast of the only two journeys she had ever taken, and were only drawn for moments from the lover she had lost, to the mother she was going to meet. "If I can only reach her arms, lay my throbbing head on her bosom and die, I have nothing left to desire," thought the heart-stricken girl. But her cup of bitterness was not yet quite filled to the brim, though she believed it was overflowing. Arrived at Dawlish, she observed an unusual silence in the streets through which the carriage passed: Sainville being recognised, many persons approached him, and, waving their heads, observed, "You have come too late—it is all over—the funeral took place an hour ago."

Mary heard no more; she was borne senseless into the desolate home, where no fond mother waited to receive her; for she who would have taken her to her heart had that day

been laid in the grave. The shock which the elopement of her daughter occasioned Mrs. Lester brought on a paralytic seizure, from which she was but slowly recovering, when a harsh letter, filled with the bitterest reproaches and most unfounded accusations from the Marquis of Deloraine, the father of Lord Mordaunt, caused a fresh attack, which in a few hours terminated her existence. This letter was written during the first violence of grief, on hearing of the death of an only son, the last hope of an ancient house. He attributed that death to the fatigues of the hurried journey to Scotland, which fatal step the proud marquis unjustly accused the mother of abetting. He branded the unhappy Mary with epithets that struck daggers into her mother's breast, and brought on a return of her malady, which ended in death. By the imprudence of the old female servant, this harrowing letter was given to Mary. She read every word, while cold tremors shook her exhausted frame; and having laid the letter on her heart, closed her eyes, as if overcome with fatigue; and it was not until some hours after, that the old attendant found that the slumber was the sleep of death—expiating with her life her first and last error.

ISOTTA GRIMANI;

A VENETIAN STORY.

"Venice, proud city, based upon the sea,
A marvel of man's enterprise and power;
Glorious even in thy ruin, who can gaze
On thee, and not bethink them of the past
When thou didst rise as by magician's wand,
On the blue waters like a mirror spread,
Reflecting temples, palaces, and domes,
In many lengthened shadows o'er the deep?
They who first reared thee, little deemed, I ween,
That thou, their refuge, won from out the sea,
(When despotism drove them from the land)
Should bend and fall by that same cold stern thrall,
That exiled them, here to erect a home,
Where freedom might their children's birthright be.
Wealth, and its offspring Luxury, combined,
To work thy ruin by Corruption's means.
How art thou fallen from thine high estate,
The Rome of ocean, visited like her,
By pilgrims journeying from their distant lands,
To view what yet remains to vouch the past,
When thou wert glorious as the seven crowned hills,
Ere yet barbarian hordes had wrought their doom.
Here Commerce flourished, pouring riches in
With floating Argosies from distant ports;
And paying with a lavish hand for Art,
That still lends glory, Venice, to thy walls!
Here came the trophies of thy prowess, too,
The steeds, Lysippus, that thy chisel wrought.
Along thy waters, lined by palaces
(Rich, and fantastic, as a poet's dream),
Are mingled minarets, fretted domes, and spires,
Of rarest sculpture, that appear to float
Gently away upon their liquid base.
Nor doth this seem more wondrous than all else
That meets my gaze where all things seem untrue;
As if Romance a fitting home had found,
To people with creations of the brain."

"This, signor, is the Palazzo Grimani," said the *cicerone*, as we stepped from our gondola on a marble staircase, nearly covered with a green and glutinous substance, the sediment of

the impure water of the canal, which was not only offensive to our olfactory nerves, but dangerously slippery.

A loud ring of the bell summoned the *custode*, whose eyes twinkled with pleasure in anticipation of the *buonamano*, for which his accustomed palm already felt impatient. Having opened the ponderous doors which creaked on their rusted hinges, and unclosed the massive shutters that excluded the light and air, he donned a faded livery-coat, that looked as if coeval with the palazzo itself, and after many respectful salutations to me, and familiar ones to my guide, conducted us from the large and gloomy entrance-hall, where he armed himself with a huge bunch of keys, to the grand suite of apartments. The interiors of Venetian palaces bear a striking resemblance to each other. Each contains nearly the same number of saloons, hung with leather stamped with faded gold or silver, tapestry, velvets, and silks, crowned by ceilings, whose gorgeousness makes the eyes ache. Each apartment has the usual number of exquisitely-painted and gilded doors, with architraves of the rarest alabasters and marbles, and most of them have small chambers, peculiar to Venetian houses, projecting from a large one, over the canal, offering some-

thing between an ancient oratory, and modern boudoir, and affording a delicious retreat for a *siesta*, a book, or the enjoyment of that not less-admired Italian luxury, the *dolce far niente*, which none but Creoles and Italians know how to enjoy. It is not the fine carvings, the massive and splendid furniture, the rare hangings, nor the gorgeous ceilings, on which the eye loves to dwell in those once magnificent, and now, alas! fast-decaying edifices. No! though they claim the tribute of a passing gaze, we fix on the glorious pictures, the triumphs of Genius and Art, in which the great and the beautiful still live on canvas, to immortalize the master hands that gave them to posterity.

Having stopped more than the usual time allotted to travellers, in silent wonder and admiration, before the golden-tinted *chef-d'œuvres* of Giorgione, whose pencil seems to have been dipped in sunbeams, so glowing are the hues it has infused; and having loitered, unwilling to depart, before the ripe and mellow treasures of Titian, in whose portraits, the pure and eloquent blood seems still to speak, I was at last preparing to quit the palace, intending to reserve for another day the pictures of Tintoretto, Bassano, and Paulo Veronese, whose velvets

and satins attracted my admiration more than the finest specimens of those materials ever produced by Lyonese, Genoese, or English loom, when my eyes and steps were arrested by a picture from the pencil of the Veronese, more beautiful than any that I had yet seen. It pourtrayed a young and lovely lady, in a rich Venetian dress, with a countenance of such exceeding expression, that it fascinated my attention.

"That portrait, signor, attracts the admiration of your countrymen, more than any other in this fine collection," said the *custode*, observing the interest it had excited. "It represents the only child of the great Grimani, and was painted by Paolo, soon after he returned from Rome, where he went in the suite of her noble father, who was ambassador at the papal court. Yes, signor," continued the *custode*, drawing himself up proudly, "it was in this very palazzo that Paolo Cagiari, then lately arrived, poor and unfriended, from Verona, was taken under the protection of Grimani, and beheld those *cenas*, whose gorgeousness he has immortalized, rendering the suppers of Paolo Veronese more celebrated than the famed ones of the luxurious Lucullus."

The *custode* betrayed not a little self-com-

placency at this display of his erudition; and my *cicerone*, while he whispered to me that Jacopo Zuccarelli passed for a very learned man, seemed not a little vain of his compatriot.

"The signora must have been singularly beautiful," remarked I to Jacopo; "but an air of deep melancholy pervades the countenance."

"Yes, signor, and great cause had the ill-fated lady for grief," and he sighed deeply.

"Family secrets cease to be such, after the lapse of centuries, Signor Jacopo," said I; "and if not trespassing too much on your time, I should much like to hear the history of the original of that beautiful portrait before us."

"It is a long story, signor," muttered Jacopo, shaking his head, and pulling from his waist-coat-pocket a large old silver watch, that looked as if it were one of the first made by Peter Hele, and which he regarded in a way that indicated rather an unwillingness to gratify my curiosity. The chink of a purse which I drew from mine, and the electrifying touch of a piece of gold, which I placed in his hand, quickly overcame his reluctance, and having expressed his desire that his communication should be made to me *alone*, I dismissed my *cicerone*, who seemed offended at the exclusion.

"Yes, yes, I warrant me, signor, Leonardi is sadly vexed because I would not let him listen to my story, that he might himself tell it to every *forestière* who may come to see this palace, and so take the bread from my mouth: that is the way with them all, a grasping and avaricious race! The story, signor, is as much my exclusive property as is the right of showing the pictures; and these are not times, the saints know, to yield up to another one of the sole means left me for earning a scanty subsistence. *Poverta non è vizio*, Heaven be thanked! else were many culpable. Besides, signor, I could not bear to have the history of a descendant of this noble house mutilated by vulgar lips, and profaned by obscene commentaries. How could such a person as Leonardi comprehend the feelings, or do justice to the motives of a scion of the Grimani stock? No! signor, it requires not only learning, but some similarity of sentiment with the noble, to execute befittingly such a task as this!"

Jacopo drew himself up, and looked so self-complacent, that I feared he would forget the heroine of his promised tale, in his more vivid interest for her biographer. Some little symptom of impatience was, I fear, but too visible

in my countenance, for he apologized for his digression, which he said had been solely occasioned by the evident curiosity of the artful and grasping *cicerone*.

"Well, signor, to begin my story, the Lady Isotta Grimani, whose portrait is before us, was considered the most beautiful of all the ladies in Venice in her day; yet though nobody contested this fact, none of the young Venetian nobles were so deeply penetrated by it as Rodrigo Manfredoni, a descendant of one of the oldest families we can boast. This same Rodrigo Manfredoni was esteemed the handsomest man in Venice, and so far surpassed the other young nobles, that it might well be said of him, '*Natura lo foce è poi ruppe la stampa*.' His fortune was unhappily not only unequal to support the dignity of his name, but, alas! insufficient to supply the wants of even a private gentleman.

"This poverty had been entailed on him by the prodigality of his ancestors, and compelled him to dwell in a palace, crumbling fast to decay, surrounded with every badge of the ancient splendour of his house: thus reminding him, with increased bitterness, of its fallen fortunes. He felt his poverty, signor, as only a proud spirit feels it, it made him still prouder;

and this drew on him the dislike and sarcasms of his unimpoverished but less noble contemporaries, which though not displayed in his presence,—for his was not a temper to have borne even the semblance of an indignity,—were freely exhibited in his absence. The consciousness of his poverty haunted him like a dark shadow, forbidding present enjoyment, and precluding future hope. But if his pride stood between him and those who would have willingly extended their friendship to him, it also saved him from much humiliation. Why did it not preserve him from love?

"Rodrigo Manfredoni, while yet in the flower of manhood, led a life of great seclusion, passing whole days in poring over the mildewed and musty *tomes*, with which the vast library in his palazzo was stored; forgetting, in reflecting on the past, the mortifications of the actual present.

"Well can I, signor, understand the tranquil pleasure of such a life, for I have pursued it for years. Yes, great is the luxury of living in the past, when the present and the future are clouded. It is a consolation, signor, to converse with the great and wise of antiquity, who give us their best thoughts, when the weak and

worldly-minded moderns give us but words, and those not worth remembering."

After this sally, a pause of self-gratulation ensued: finding himself, however, unsupported by a respondent admiration from me, Jacopo shortly resumed.

"Rodrigo mixed rarely in society; and when in it, the cold dignity of his bearing, and the ceremonious reserve of his manners, repelled all approaches to familiarity.

"'As proud as Lucifer,' was the phrase generally applied to him when he was the subject, as not unfrequently happened, of animadversion; 'and handsome as a fallen angel too!' would some fair dame murmur, as her eye glanced on his noble countenance and stately figure.

"At a grand *fête* given to celebrate the sixteenth anniversary of the birth of the Lady Isotta, all the nobles of Venice were assembled in this palace, and amongst them came Il Conte Manfredoni. It was the first time that the Lady Isotta had been seen, except in the privacy of the domestic circle; but the fame of her rare beauty had gone forth, and all were anxious to judge if it had been exaggerated. The ladies were strongly disposed to think that

her charms had been over-praised; the young nobles, on the contrary, were sure that more than justice had not been rendered them; and the old ones were content with the knowledge that whatever doubt might exist as to her present attractions, none could be offered as to the vast wealth of her father, whose sole heiress she was.

"But though the guests at the palace were prepared to see beauty of no common order, they were astonished at the surpassing loveliness of the Lady Isotta. All eyes were fixed on her, while hers fell beneath the passionate glances they encountered at every side; but not until they had met the deep gaze of Rodrigo Manfredoni,—a gaze whose soul-beaming expression sent the bright blood mantling to her delicate cheek,—did she derive any satisfaction from the admiration she excited; while he stood as if rooted to the spot, unable to remove his eyes from her faultless face. When the Lady Isotta lifted her snowy eyelids again, the same deep, passionate gaze encountered her timid glance; and neither ever forgot the look they then exchanged.

"Yes, signor, however you cold inhabitants of the chilly north may doubt it, there is such

a thing as love at first sight, and this story proves it, for *in un batter d'occhio*, their hearts were gone.

"When the *cena*, which in those days always crowned a *fête*, was announced, the young Isotta's heart palpitated with the hope that the only cavalier on whom her eyes had rested for a moment, would approach to lead her to the banquet, and involuntarily she looked towards him. Again their eyes met, though he was retiring from the apartment, and had at the moment turned to bestow a parting glance on the beautiful being, whose image was already stamped on his heart.

"That glance, signor, was like the dart the Parthians let fly when retreating—it took a sure and fatal aim; and from that moment, every thought, every feeling of the young Isotta, was absorbed by the stately and handsome stranger.

"'Where is Manfredoni?' demanded Grimani, looking round. 'Will he not, on so joyous an occasion as the present, break through his general habits of austerity, and partake our festivity? He surely will not depart without pledging a bumper of ruby wine to the health of the heiress of our house?'

" 'His excellency has left the palace,' replied the *major domo ;* and a smile was exchanged by many of the guests around—a smile that passed not unheeded by the fair mistress of the *fête*.

" 'Yes, he is proud as Lucifer,' was the rejoinder to a remark made by one of a group near her.

" 'And of what,' asked a young noble, with a sneer, 'except it be of his poverty?'

" 'That,' replied another, 'would be a curious cause for pride'—(the speaker was a rich man).

" 'And yet,' said a distinguished-looking cavalier, 'when a man is the last descendant of so ancient a house as Manfredoni's, without the means of supporting its pristine splendour, he may well be pardoned the pride that induces him to decline partaking hospitalities he cannot return.'

" Isotta felt an instantaneous predilection in favour of the last speaker; and Manfredoni, with his noble air, and high and pale brow, round which clustered short and profuse curls, dark as the raven's wing, seemed invested with new attractions, now that she learnt that he was proud and poor,—a union of qualities, that

however uncongenial to the worldly natures of men, seldom fails to excite interest in the generous minds of women.

" 'His house is ancient enough, heaven knows,' said a former speaker, ; 'so ancient, that it must soon crumble in ruins over its master's head, unless he can find some rich heiress to act as a Caryatide, and prop it up, or that he turn his vast store of erudition to a profitable account, by discovering the philosopher's stone: which no one has a better chance of finding, if the old proverb be true, that *la poverta e la madre di tutti l'arti.*'

" How Isotta shrunk with disgust from this sneer, and turned from the splendour and gaiety around her, to dwell on the image of Manfredoni, with his deep melancholy eyes,—those eyes that had encountered hers with a glance of such passionate tenderness. She painted him to her imagination, retiring from the gilded and illuminated saloons of her home, to the dark and cheerless chambers of his ruined palace, and a tear dimmed her eye at the picture her fancy formed.

" The *fête* ended, and the guests retired, the Lady Isotta sought her sleeping-room with feelings as new as they were overpowering.

Love had entered her youthful breast in the guise of pity—one of the most irresistible the sly archer can assume to win woman's heart. She turned with distaste from the costly elegance of every object that met her gaze, because they formed a painful contrast with the ruined home of him she already loved—that home whose cheerless desolation her fancy had but too faithfully pourtrayed. Her attendant, who was no other than her nurse, who had never left her since her birth, struck with the pensiveness of her countenance, inquired with anxiety, if she were ill?

" 'No, *cara Beatrice*, only fatigued with all the noise and glare,' and she sunk languidly on a low couch near the window. 'Extinguish all the lights save one, and veil that; for all this gilding, and the glowing colours of the hangings, oppress me by their brightness.'

" 'Did you not tell me, *Beatrice mia*,' asked Isotta, eagerly, after a moment's pause, 'that before you came to this palace, you had dwelt with the Manfredoni?'

" 'Yes, *carissima signorina*,' replied the nurse; 'I have told you often of the happy days I spent in that noble family: so often, that I thought, that is I feared, you were weary

of hearing the name, you looked so coldly indifferent when I repeated it; but why, *cara signora*, do you ask me now?'

"Ere the Lady Isotta could reply, the sound of a guitar was heard from a gondola beneath the balcony. She made a sign to have the casement opened, and her nurse had no sooner done so than she exclaimed,

"'Surely I know that voice?' and on looking again, Beatrice discovered in him who touched the instrument with a master's hand, no other than Il Conte Rodrigo Manfredoni.

"Now was the cause of her youthful lady's question explained; but if any doubt remained, it was removed by the song that followed the first prelude.

SONG.

Doth slumber veil thine eyes of light,
That shine like stars in dewy night;
Or dwell they on the moonlit sea,
Whence glides my gondola to thee?

Each gentle breeze that murmurs by,
Seems perfumed by thy balmy sigh:
They stole their fragrance from thy lip,
As bees from flow'rets, sweetness sip.

Thine eyes, but thrice mine own have met,
But oh! their softness thrills me yet,
As woman's glance ne'er thrilled before,
Waking this heart to hope once more.

Sleep on—but be thy dreams of me,
For in thy slumber I would be
Thy thought, as thou for ever art
Enshrined within this burning heart.

Still o'er thy couch may angels keep
Their watch, to guard thee while in sleep,
And mayst thou wake refreshed and bright,
As opening roses meet the light.

Oh! couldst *thou* dream, how in my soul,
That ne'er till now knew Love's control,
Thy glance has chased away despair,
And filled its place with visions fair!

"Isotta sat covered with blushes, her eyes cast down, lest their dewy radiance should disclose how truly every note of the melodious voice she had listened to, touched an answering chord in her heart, and her maidenly reserve alarmed lest her nurse should discover how deeply she participated the feeling expressed by the singer.

"Beatrice sighed deeply as she bade her lady good night; but the fair Isotta was too much engrossed by the new and delicious emotions which occupied her breast, to observe the unusual pensiveness of her affectionate attendant, who, with the prescience of age, already foresaw the danger that menaced the peace of the heiress of Grimani.

"The gondola disappeared, and the signora sought her pillow, to dream of love, as only pure minds and noble natures dream, ere experience has dimmed the brightness that youth sheds upon all around it.

"Night after night, might the same gondola be seen beneath that balcony, and the same liquidly harmonious voice be heard floating from it; but no longer were the notes tremulous from timidity, as on the first serenade; for now he who sung was assured of the answering affection of the lady of his love. The nurse, won over to their interest by her attachment to the lovers, had consented to be the medium of correspondence between them, and no day passed without bringing an interchange of letters, in which the passionate feelings of both were poured forth, with all the genuine fervency that a first love, and in the sunny South, can dictate. Those were happy days, signor, and they felt them to be so; but when was bliss found to be of long duration? I have read that happiness resembleth the bird of Paradise, which, though often in view, never lights upon the earth.

"And now a vague rumour reached the

nurse, that the hand of the Lady Isotta was promised to Il Conte* Barbarigo, a young nobleman of immense possessions, but of a stern and coarse mind, in short, the very reverse of the noble Manfredoni. Too soon was this rumour confirmed by Grimani announcing to his gentle daughter, that in a few days she was to become the bride of Barbarigo.

"Overpowered by the suddenness of the blow that threatened to prove fatal to her peace, she nearly fainted; and her father having left her to the care of her faithful nurse, retired without suspecting that aught save maidenly reserve, and surprise, had produced the agitation and deep emotion he had witnessed. Into the sympathizing bosom of Beatrice were poured all the sorrows of the Lady Isotta; axiously did both anticipate the nocturnal visit of Manfredoni, that he might be consulted on the course to be adopted.

"At the accustomed hour his gondola was moored beneath the balcony, and the following song thrilled on the ear and heart of her to whom it was addressed, the elasticity of spirit it breathed, forming a sad contrast to the gloomy presentiment that filled her breast.

SONG.

Love can waken hope
  In hearts where long it slept;
Love can make joy beam
  In eyes that long have wept.

Love can make all bright,
  That clouded was before;
'Tis life's purest gift,
  And Heaven can grant no more.

Fortune, now I scorn
  Thy persecuting hate,
For on Love alone
  Depends Rodrigo's fate.

"How did the happy security of her lover, as indicated in his song, add poignancy to the depressed feelings of his lovely mistress!

"A letter detailing the announcement made to her by her father, and which she had spent the last hour in writing, was thrown with the accustomed *bouquet* of flowers into the gondola, which she saw float away, with a heaviness of heart, to which she had hitherto been a stranger.

"At an early hour the next morning, the nurse betook herself to the Palazzo Manfredoni, and as she passed through its vast chambers, and contemplated its faded splendour, she sighed at the cheerless prospects of her young

lady, to whom no alternative was left, but poverty and love, or splendour without affection. Yet still the faithful nurse had enough of the woman left in her heart, though it was chilled by age, to be quite sure that the Lady Isotta would be happier in the ruined palace of Manfredoni with him for her wedded lord, than in the magnificent one of Barbarigo, married to its heartless owner.

"Women, signor, all believe in the indestructibility of love, and the necessity of religion; and she is no true woman who doubts the power of either.

"Beatrice found Manfredoni pale and sterner than she had ever previously beheld him; and it was evident from his haggard looks, and discomposed dress, that he had not slept.

"'How fares your lady, good nurse?' asked he.

"'Alas! signor, but sick at heart.'

"'Fool, fool! that I was,' exclaimed Rodrigo, passionately, 'to cast over her young and sunny life, the dark cloud that has so long loured on mine. It was madness! nay, worse, to win her—to share a love so unprosperous as mine must ever be; and yet, selfish maniac

that I was, I forgot all the misery in which I was steeped, in the intoxicating happiness of loving and being beloved.'

" 'That happiness, *eccellenza*, is still yours,' said the nurse.

" 'Call it not happiness, it is misery, Beatrice, situated as I am. What, would you have me transplant the beautiful but delicate flower, from the sunny home where it grew, and flourishes, to the cold and cheerless spot in which I am forced to dwell? Would you, nurse, who love her, urge me to unite her bright destiny with my dreary one? Is this ruined pile,' and he looked around him with bitterness, 'a suitable home for her who has been cradled in luxury, and who knows not even by report, the privations that stern poverty imposes? Behold, good nurse, the fast-decaying walls of my ancestral house, and tell me if loving, nay, adoring, Isotta as I do, I could dare condemn her to share such a fate as mine? Would not she, bright and lovely as she is, appear in this gloomy abode, like a sunbeam illumining a prison, or like the flowers she gave me yester evening'—(pointing to the *bouquet*, which was in a vase of rock crystal enriched with precious gems, one of the last wrecks of the costly trea-

sures of Art that had appertained to his ancestors)—'sadly out of her natural sphere?'

"'Woe is me, *eccellenza*, that you thought not of all this, ere you had won her virgin heart,' replied the nurse; 'but now that heart is yours, will not the Lady Isotta be more wretched in splendour without you, than in—' Beatrice paused.

"'Poverty with me, you would say,' interrupted Manfredoni, and the colour rose to his very brow.

"'But, signor, my lord her father loves her dearly, he may relent, and——'

"'Bestow the richly-dowered heiress of his house on the ruined Manfredoni,' said Rodrigo.

"'Well, well, signor conte, there would be nothing strange in that; your house is as ancient as his own, and heiresses as richly endowed as his, have intermarried with your great ancestors. But if he should refuse,' said Beatrice, urged on by her knowledge of the immoveable attachment of her mistress, and the misery that must be hers, unless united to Rodrigo, 'why not make her yours secretly before the altar, and so preclude the possibility of her being forced to wed another?'

"Manfredoni turned to her haughtily, and she was awed by the dignity of his aspect, and the sternness of his regard, as he exclaimed, 'You forget that Grimani might consider me rather as the stealer of his heiress, than the passionate lover of his beautiful daughter!'

"'Can you allow pride to influence you at such a moment, signor?' asked the nurse, reproachfully, 'or can you reflect more on what her father *may think*, than on what she *must feel?* Pride, *eccellenza*, ought to keep people from getting into scrapes, but alas! it seldom does, and woe is me, still more seldom helps to get them out of them.'

"What more the good nurse said, 'twere bootless to repeat, let it suffice to say, that her representations, aided by the passionate love of Manfredoni, conquered his pride, and that she was the bearer of a letter from him to the Lady Isotta, filled with expressions of an affection as true and ardent as ever quickened the pulses of a youthful heart, yet breathing the remorse he felt at urging her to an union, which must expose her to poverty like his. Isotta had no dread of this gaunt spectre which has appalled so many stout hearts, and impelled to so many vile actions. Her notions of it were, like all

those of her high station and unbounded wealth, vague and indistinct. They presented only to her imagination less gorgeous *salons*, fewer domestics, less luxurious repasts, and there was nothing to alarm her in such a prospect; but she thought not of it. She dwelt only on the happiness of being indissolubly united to her dear Rodrigo, and of having him ever—ever, near her. Her father, she was sure, would pardon their stolen nuptials, her first, her sole offence, and would soon learn to love Manfredoni,—how could it be otherwise? But even had she witnessed the dreary reality of her lover's situation, hers was not a mind to have shrunk from partaking it, or a heart that would have cooled beneath the chilling influence of poverty.

"The generous devotion of Isotta vanquished the last struggles of pride in Rodrigo's breast, and it was agreed that on the ensuing night the nurse should disguise her young lady in the mantilla of her niece, and with her leave the Palazzo Grimani, meet in the next street Manfredoni, who was to conduct them to a church, where a priest would be in attendance to join their hands, and pronounce the nuptial benediction. On the morning of this eventful day,

Il Conte Barbarigo was led to the apartment of Isotta, by her father, and presented as her affianced husband. The trembling lady essayed to address her parent, but her timidity overpowered her resolution, the words died on her lips, and he left Barbarigo to plead his own suit, ere she had recovered sufficient self-command to speak. How greatly was her repugnance to her suitor increased, when in him she recognised the person who had so unfeelingly and contemptuously commented on the poverty of Manfredoni, the first night that she had ever seen him! He poured forth a rhapsody of compliments to her, and self-gratulations on his own good fortune in having secured a prize which all must desire to possess, and seizing the trembling hand of Isotta, would have pressed his lips on it, had she not instantly and proudly snatched it from his rude grasp, informing him that though his suit was sanctioned by her father, *she* had quite determined on not acceding to it. The surprise with which he heard this declaration was mingled with more of indignation than was befitting a lover to display before the lady to whose affection he aspired; and his tone approached to insolence as he demanded, rather than entreated to know, if he was to

attribute her refusal of his addresses to a preference for another, or to a personal dislike to himself. Her natural dignity led her to resent the impertinence of his manner by answering that she considered it quite sufficient to state that she decidedly declined his offer; and so saying, with an air of offended delicacy, she withdrew from the chamber.

"Grimani was nearly as astonished, and quite as vexed as Barbarigo, when the latter recounted to him the unfavourable result of his interview with the Lady Isotta.

"'Be assured she loves another,' said the rejected suitor, regarding his image complacently in the mirror opposite to which he had taken his station, 'otherwise I do not think she could have declined my proposals so decidedly.'

"'Her loving another is out of the question,' said Grimani; 'for she has never seen a man except myself and her confessor, since the night of her presentation. I must ascertain the motives of this inexplicable refusal, and I trust the result will prove that she cannot long remain inexorable to your vows.'

"Grimani hurried to the apartment of his daughter, giving way to the first angry feeling

she had ever excited in his breast; and sternly demanded why she had presumed to act in disobedience to his wishes.

"The Lady Isotta tremblingly avowed her repugnance to Barbarigo, and falling at the feet of her father, confessed that she loved *another.*

"'How?—when?—and where,' asked the astonished and enraged Grimani, 'have you seen any one to love? Tell me instantly, I command you.'

"The name of Manfredoni had no sooner been pronounced by her faltering tongue, than his rage became ungovernable.

"'What!' exclaimed he, 'would you wed a beggar—one whose palace is crumbling into ruins around him, and only fit for the abode of the foul birds of night? One whose ungovernable pride and squalid poverty, render him the subject of ridicule among all the nobles? It is absurd, and excites my choler, to think that a daughter of mine should be so infatuated; but I shall conquer this obstinacy.'

"Kindness might have softened the feelings of Isotta, but the contemptuous expressions used by her father aroused a pride and wilfulness hitherto foreign to her nature; and as he

left the apartment, uttering invectives against her and her lover, she rejoiced in the thought, that in a few hours she should be Manfredoni's bride, and atone to him by her devoted love, for all the slights and injuries poverty had entailed on him. At the appointed hour Isotta, disguised in the habiliments of her nurse's niece, and with her veil drawn closely over her face, supported by the arm of the faithful Beatrice, stole tremblingly from the home of her childhood; and being met by Manfredoni, was conducted to church, where a priest joined their hands. Never did Hymen's bonds unite two more enamoured hearts than Rodrigo's and Isotta's, who now pressed each other's hands, and listened to each other's voices for the first time. The progress of their love had been so rapid, that no opportunity of meeting had offered at any of the *fêtes* to which both might have been invited, and to enter the Palazzo Grimani clandestinely, thereby compromising the delicacy of her who was dearer to him than life, was never thought of by the honourable and high-minded Rodrigo. But even had such been his desire, his fair mistress would not have consented, nor would the nurse have permitted a step so likely to prove injurious to the unsul-

lied purity of her young charge. Now, however, as the husband of Isotta, he had a right to enter, and the nurse willingly took charge of the ladder of ropes, with which, on leaving the church, the bridegroom had charged her, and which she was to secure to the balustrade of the balcony, and throw down when his gondola approached.

"It was not without deep reluctance that the married lovers separated on arriving near the Palazzo Grimani, though with the assurance of meeting again in the space of a few brief hours. The nurse had to entreat and chide, again and again, yet still those fond hands, that had never before that night been interlaced, were loth to quit the tender grasp that bound them together, and their enraptured ears drank in the new and unaccustomed tones of those delicious voices, that had hitherto only been heard faintly at a distance, now breathing whispers of fervent, happy affection, uttered in all the sincerity and confidence that wedded love can alone bestow.'

"The new-made bride and her nurse regained their apartment in safety, the ladder was made fast, the Lady Isotta trembling at the seeming fragility of the rope, and Beatrice

reassuring her of its strength. How often and proudly did the bride press to her lips the golden symbol of that union on which the church had so lately bestowed its benediction, and repeat, that *now* not even her father could separate her from her husband. The lady had retired to her couch, and the nurse having heard the gondola approach beneath the balcony, some twenty minutes before the appointed hour, uttered an exclamation at the impatience of love, which had sent Manfredoni so much sooner than she looked for his coming, again entreated her lady not to permit her lord to speak save in the lowest whispers, lest his voice should be heard, withdrew, leaving the nuptial chamber in total darkness, the moment she heard the ladder of ropes fall into the gondola beneath.

"Quickly a step was heard ascending, the casement was closed, and Isotta whispered,

"'Rodrigo, my love, my lord, my husband! speak to me only in the lowest tones, for we may be overheard. Does not our stolen marriage appear like a dream? It is only this blessed ring that you so lately gave me at the altar that convinces me I am indeed your wife, for ever, and ever yours.'

"Two hours had flown by, when Grimani, rushed into his daughter's chamber, followed by eight armed men, who buried their stilettos deep in the breast of him on whose shoulder the head of Isotta reclined, and whose death-shriek awoke her from slumber.

"The blaze of their torches fell full on the face of the murdered man, in whose scowling lineaments, she discovered not the countenance of her husband, but those of the hateful Barbarigo.

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"The suspicion that secret meetings had taken place between the lovers had determined Grimani to employ spies to watch the palazzo at night. A conviction that the Lady Isotta's rejection of his suit had arisen from a preference to another, had induced Barbarigo also to watch, and he did so in person. On the previous night, he had seen a gondola approach the balcony of the Grimani palace, had heard the serenade, and observed the lady and her nurse let drop a letter to the cavalier who was in it, he had tracked the gondola on its return to the Palazzo Manfredoni, and ascertained that it was its master who had thus held a clandestine correspondence with the Lady Isotta.

Suspicions, the most injurious to her honour, flashed on his unworthy mind; yet still the desire to possess her hand, and by that means acquire the immense wealth to which she was heiress, remained in its pristine force. The ensuing night he again approached in his gondola, with the intention of watching the movements of his rival, and of frustrating, if possible, his plans, when seeing the ladder of ropes thrown down, and the light withdrawn, he instantly adopted the fiend-like notion of taking advantage of the discovery he had made, and of thus securing by the most foul means, the prize he sought to possess.

"Before ascending the balcony, he charged two of his gondoliers, who were, in truth, bravoes in his pay, to intercept any gondola that approached the palazzo, and to silence for ever, with their stilettos, any cavalier who might occupy it. Too well had his orders been obeyed, for the corse of Manfredoni, pierced by many wounds, was a few days after drawn forth from the canal.

"Grimani's spies had discovered that a cavalier had entered the apartment of his daughter by a ladder of ropes; but as he was with the Council of Ten, in the palazzo of the doge, he

was not apprized of the circumstance till nearly two hours after it had occurred. Concluding that the nocturnal intruder could be no other than Manfredoni, he determined on taking signal vengeance on him, by getting him shut up in the prison of the inquisition; but when he found his daughter in the arms of him whom he imagined to be her seducer, his vindictive rage knew no bounds, and he ordered the attendants to efface the stain on the honour of his ancient house, by the blood of him who had inflicted it.

"The piercing shriek with which the Lady Isotta recognised the face of her infamous betrayer, was the last knell of her departing reason. She never showed the slightest symptom of recollection after, except by insisting on being always attired as a bride; a harmless fancy, in which her unhappy father indulged her, and seated on a low ottoman, she would sit for hours gazing on the nuptial ring which still encircled the finger on which Manfredoni had placed it.

"Beatrice, signor, was the great-grandmother of my father, she related this story so often to her descendants, that one of them, distinguished for that love of literature, which

marked our family, and which without vanity, I may say, has descended to us from father to son, wrote down the particulars, which I have so many times perused, that I repeat the history *con amore*, as you may have observed, signor, with my own comments thereupon. And by whom could the sad tale be related with greater claims for sympathy than from a descendant of the faithful nurse of its unhappy though lovely heroine?"

MATRIMONY.

" A something light as air—a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken—
Oh! love that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.
And ruder words will soon rush in,
To spread the breach that words begin:
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They wore in courtship's smiling day;
And voices lose the tone that shed
A tenderness round all they said;
Till fast declining, one by one,
The sweetnesses of love are gone,
And hearts, so lately mingled, seem
Like broken clouds—or like the stream,
That smiling left the mountain's brow,
As though its waters ne'er could sever,
Yet, ere it reach the plain below,
Break into floods, that part for ever."

LALLA ROOKH.

"WE had a very agreeable party to-day, and the Merrington's are really pleasant people. Their *chef* is a good *artiste*, and they always manage to draw around them people who suit each other," said Lord Henry Fitzhardinge to his young and fair wife, as they drove from

Lord Merrington's mansion in Grosvenor-square.

Lord Henry Fitzhardinge, be it known to our readers, was just six weeks married; and the said six weeks had passed in a sojourn at the lakes, where a picturesque dwelling on the banks of Windermere had enabled the newly-wedded pair to enjoy all the privacy so much desired during the early days of marriage. This dinner at Lord Merrington's had been the first accepted engagement since their arrival in London, a few days before, and consequently was the first interruption to the *tête-à-tête* repasts to which they had lately been accustomed.

"But you are silent, Emily," resumed he, "did you not think the party an agreeable one?"

"Not particularly so," replied the lady.

"I wonder at that," rejoined Lord Henry, "for you sate next the Marquis of Allerton, who is considered a remarkably pleasant man."

"I am rarely delighted with utter strangers, I confess," resumed Lady Emily; "but this is an old-fashioned peculiarity from which *you* seem to be exempt."

"*Delighted* is a strong expression, Emily, particularly as applied to utter strangers! But now do, like a dear, good girl, tell me what has gone wrong?"

So saying, he drew his wife tenderly towards his side, and stooped to impress a kiss on her delicate cheek.—Lady Emily shrank from his embrace, and turned her head in an opposite direction, a movement that excited the first symptom approaching to displeasure that she had ever caused in the mind of her husband.

Unwilling to indulge in this growing dissatisfaction towards his fair young wife, Lord Henry again addressed her, saying, "Pray, my sweet love, leave off this child's-play, and tell me why you are out of humour?"

"Out of humour!" reiterated the lady; "*well*, if you designate unhappiness by the epithet of ill-humour, I had better conceal my feelings altogether."

It was now Lord Henry's turn to echo the words of his wife.

"Unhappiness!" repeated he; "why Emily, you really surprise, as well as mortify me. In

Heaven's name, what cause for unhappiness can *you* have?"

By the light of the carriage-lamps, he now saw an embroidered handkerchief applied to the eyes of his wife, and plainly heard the rising sobs, that heaved the shawl which covered her beautiful bust. Again he wound his arm fondly round her symmetrical waist, and whispered,

"Emily, my own Emily, why do you weep? Indeed, you alarm and distress me."

At this moment, the carriage stopped at the door of their mansion in Belgrave-square, which being thrown open, showed the well-lighted vestibule in which were ranged some half-dozen liveried domestics, headed by the *maître-d'hôtel* and groom of the chambers, formally drawn up to receive their lord and lady. Each and all of the inquisitorial band stole furtive glances at the face of Lady Emily, on which the traces of recent tears were but too visible.

She thought not of the prying eyes that marked her sadness, being engrossed wholly by

the feelings that occupied her mind. Not so, however, Lord Henry: *he* observed that the attention of his servants was awakened, and experienced additional dissatisfaction from his apprehension of the comments they were likely to make on their lady's evident emotion.

He offered his arm to assist her to ascend the stairs; but she affected not to see that he did so, and held by the balustrade. The groom of the chambers, who preceded them, had no sooner thrown open the door of her ladyship's dressing-room, than Lady Emily hastily rang the bell for her *femme-de-chambre;* thus precluding the explanation which her mortified lord anxiously sought. The lady sank into a *bergère*, and gave free course to the tears suppressed while ascending to her room; and just as she was sullenly repelling the attempt of Lord Henry to wipe them from her cheek, *Marabout* her attendant entered.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* vat miladi is eel, *n'est-ce-pas?* Vill I send for de doctors, de apotecaries, and every body?"

So saying, the bustling Frenchwoman ran to the toilet-table, and seized a flaçon of *eau-*

d'Hongrie, which she held towards the nostrils of her weeping mistress.

"O miladi ave de asteriks; I see vell someting make miladi.eel, or somebody vex her."

And this discreet conjecture, was followed by a suspicious glance towards Lord Henry, who was affectionately holding the little white hand, on the delicate finger of which, he had placed the nuptial ring but six fleeting weeks before.

As he looked on the flushed cheeks, down which the tears were streaming from red eyes, he could hardly fancy that the being before him was the lovely creature whom, only a few hours previously, he led forth beaming with health and gaiety; and it must be confessed the change in her appearance, excited more ill-humour than pity in his heart; for candour compels us to declare that, *malgré* all the poets who have prated about the attraction of beauty in tears, we have never yet seen a single illustration in proof of their assertions on this point, nor met a single husband who did not shrink in distaste from the exhibition.

"What can be the matter with her?" thought Lord Henry. "This is a pleasant commence-

ment of the conjugal scenes that Mortimer used to describe! Well, I thought Emily was exempt from such folly; but all women it seems are alike."

Though these unpleasant thoughts passed through his mind, he nevertheless checked the oppressive attentions of the bustling *Marabout*, poured out a glass of water, which he held to the swollen lips of his wife, and applied some *eau-d'Hongrie* to her flushed and throbbing forehead.

During these operations, *Marabout* deeply mortified, remarked with the acuteness peculiar to her class, and a satisfaction caused by her ill-will towards Lord Henry for having repulsed her troublesome *petits soins*, that her lady evinced a very unusual coldness towards her liege lord.

"Aha!" thought the *soubrette*, "de moon of oney is over; *she* cry, *he* look cross; she not say one vord of all de loaf she say to him at oder time—*tant mieux*, dey make me vexed vid deir too much loaf."

Lord Henry, finding that his presence afforded no relief to the inexplicable chagrin of his wife, at length withdrew to his dressing-

room; and, truth to say, never before felt so little impatient to rejoin her. He passed in review all that had occurred at dinner and during the *soirée* at Lord Merrinton's; but could discover no cause for the tears he had witnessed. They must have consequently proceeded from ill-humour; yet Emily had been so sweet-tempered ever since their marriage, that he could hardly bring himself to think that without any provocation she could be thus unreasonable. At length, his *toilette de nuit* completed (and he had taken more than thrice the ordinary time employed for the operation), he sought the dressing-room of his wife. Though prepared for bed, she had not dismissed *Marabout*, who stood beside her chair with a mingled look of consternation and pity, as if her lady was in imminent danger.

"Milor, madame is so eel, dat I tink it be very proper to send for one or two doctors."

"Do, for Heaven's sake, speak Emily!" said Lord Henry; "are you ill?"

"I shall be better by and by," sobbed the lady; "but do not speak to me, I cannot bear it, indeed I cannot," and here she wept anew.

"You may go, *Marabout,*" said Lord Henry.

"*Mais milor, si miladi—*"

"Go," repeated Lord Henry, impatiently, "your presence is not required."

The *femme-de-chambre* having withdrawn, Lord Henry once more entreated his wife to acquaint him with the cause of her tears.

"Do not ask me, Henry, I'll try to forget it; but *indeed,* I have been so—wounded, so—wretched, that—," and a fresh burst of tears interrupted the completion of the sentence.

"But you really must tell me, Emily; why should you have any concealment from me?"

"How strange, how unfeeling, Henry, that you *should* not have guessed! Ah! this proves that there is little of that sympathy between us, that I foolishly fancied existed."

"Well, I assure you, Emily, however unfeeling it may appear, I cannot even imagine what has distressed you; and as it is growing late, and you have occasion for repose, I entreat you will at once tell me?"

"Can it indeed be possible, Henry, that you were not aware that my agitation proceeded from the attentions, ay, the *marked* attentions

you lavished on that odious Lady Allerton, all the time of dinner?"

"*Marked* attentions, Emily! Why I swear, that nothing more than the ordinary politeness expected from every man towards the woman he sits next at dinner, was paid by me."

"Oh! Henry, how *can* you say so? when you know you talked to her all the time; yes, and you laughed with her too, when she was speaking of some book that *she* had read, and that you had read, but of which I don't know a page; and you were both so much amused at finding your tastes agreed, that neither of you seemed to think of any one else at table. Oh! she is an odious flirt, and I never shall like her, that I shan't, and so I let her see, when she said she would call on me."

"Good heavens, Emily! is it possible that you can have been so absurd, as to offend a person, who is, in every respect, so desirable an acquaintance—a woman, universally considered to be one of the most *distinguée* in England?"

"And you, Henry, is it possible that you have the courage openly to display your *entichement* for her, *even* to my face? This is too

cruel!" and here the tears of Lady Emily flowed afresh.

"You really provoke me, Emily; how *can* you be so foolish as to imagine for a moment, that an idea of paying any thing more than common politeness to Lady Allerton, ever entered my head?"

"Do you call it nothing more than common politeness, to look in her face each time you addressed her, or that she spoke to you? to offer to pour out water for her with such a softness of manner, as if it were me to whom you were speaking? *me*, whom you have a thousand times swore that you adore. And all this attention to a person whom you have never seen above half-a-dozen times in your life!"

"Who ever heard of such folly? Emily, Emily, I never expected such absurd weakness from you! What is there more ill-bred, than to avert the eyes from the person with whom one converses? And really as to offering water in a soft tone of voice, I cannot help laughing at such a charge. I cannot conceive any one, with the pretensions to gentlemanlike manner,

addressing a woman in any other than a gentle tone."

"There is a vast difference in the modes of looking at, or speaking to people, Henry; and you know it as well as I do, you positively looked with tenderness on that odious woman whom I shall always hate, and only occasionally glanced towards me; with a provoking smile, too, as if it was quite natural that *she* should be the principal object of your attention at table. I could not swallow a morsel, and felt ready every moment to burst into tears; while that tiresome husband of hers, kept boring me with his officious civilities, instead of checking the disgusting levity of his coquettish wife, which he ought to be ashamed to permit."

"What injustice and absurdity! Lady Allerton accused of being a coquette, and guilty of levity! Never was there a charge so wholly unfounded."

"Oh! I see, Lord Henry, you cannot bear to have the least fault found with her. You would have all the world think her as perfect as you do."

"I perceive, Lady Emily, it is useless to

persist in my endeavours to pacify your ridiculous suspicions, and therefore I shall abstain from any further explanation."

"You adopt the general mode used by those who cannot justify their conduct. But I am a fool to suffer from your unkindness. I should, like you, forget that I am married, and think only of the person who happens to sit next me; and if I loved you as little as you do me, this would be an easy task; but I—I—," and sobs checked her utterance.

This avowal of love awakened the tenderness of Lord Henry, which, truth to own, had been slumbering during the discussion, sent to sleep by the ruefully-changed aspect of his wife, and this first display of unfounded jealousy. He threw his arms fondly around her, swore that no woman on earth could fascinate his eyes but her; and that he did violence to his inclinations, by showing even the ordinary attentions of society to another.

His appeased wife once more smiled, and lavished on him all the touching demonstrations of tenderness, which are the consolations for the

quarrels of married lovers, during the first year of wedlock, before the frequency of domestic jars has impaired the delicate bloom of affection, which, like that on the peach, constitutes one of its chief attractions, and which, when once destroyed, can never be restored.

Strange to say, when Lord Henry and Lady Emily sat at breakfast next morning, and that he looked on her beautiful face, the recollection of its changed aspect the night before, came back to him with a painful emotion; and as he wondered how aught so fair and gentle could have been so angry and disfigured, he breathed a prayer that he might not often be condemned to behold her countenance as it then appeared. Desirous of preventing the recurrence of scenes similar to that of the previous night, he entered into an explanation of the conduct expected in general society; and hinted that any deviation from established usages, on his part, would expose them to ridicule.

"You do not mean to say," asked Lady Emily, "that men are expected to make love to every flirt to whom they may sit next?"

"Really, Emily, you are very provoking, thus to confound ordinary civilities with those attentions peculiar to affection."

"And you, Henry, are more than provoking in employing this sophistry to impose on my inexperience."

With a patience, the exercise of which was very new to Lord Henry, and a tact not generally possessed, he endeavoured to explain the attentions every man was expected to pay to the lady by whom he happened to be placed; and urged that any omission of them would be deemed a solecism in good breeding. Lady Emily listened with sundry symptoms of impatience, while her *caro sposo* touched on those points, and interrupted him by declaring that *she* never could become used to see him paying attention to any woman but herself.

"Let me entreat you, Emily, unless you wish to render us both objects of ridicule to all our acquaintance, conquer these unreasonable fancies, and learn to draw a line of distinction between the civilities which all men are obliged to offer to women in society, and those that are prompted by a decided preference. To have you named

as a jealous wife, would be painful and humiliating to me; and better would it be to abandon society altogether, than to subject ourselves to the mockery that always awaits those who expose their weaknesses."

"But can you heed what a whole set of people, about whom we care nothing, may think?" asked Lady Emily. "One wish of yours, dearest Henry, is of more importance to me, than the opinion of the whole world united! Why should not *my* wishes have an equal influence with you?"

"Explain those wishes, Emily, that I may distinctly comprehend them; for at present, I confess I do not quite understand your meaning."

"Well, then, my beloved, when we *are* obliged to go into society, or receive at home, I would wish you, when compelled to speak to other women, never to look at them with those dear eyes, just as you do at me when we are alone; but while speaking to them, to look at me, and never to talk to them on any but the most commonplace and uninteresting topics: never to become animated during the conversation,

and never to indulge in those soft and deep tones of voice, to which I cannot bear any woman's ear but mine should listen."

Lord Henry burst into a laugh, which he vainly endeavoured to suppress; but it found no echo from his wife.

"Would you not also wish me always, Emily, to select the ugliest and oldest woman to sit next."

"Unfortunately, Henry, as the stupid rules of precedence leave no choice, such an arrangement, however desirable it might be, is not practicable; but as the mode of gratifying my wishes, which I pointed out, is, I hope you will adopt it."

"Now imagine me, my own Emily, seated by a lady at dinner, while you are on the opposite side of the table. An *épergne* obstructs our eyes from encountering without an exertion; but, in order to satisfy you, I, while addressing a comment on the heat or cold of the day, the dulness of town, or the dust of the park, to my female neighbour, turn round like a machine on a chimney-top, to catch

your glance, giving you the *preconcerted* look of tenderness, which if observed by the guests around, would set them all laughing at us."

While uttering these words, Lord Henry enacted the gestures he described, so comically, that Lady Emily was forced to join in his mirth, and they separated for the morning, in perfect good-humour; but without having come to any definitive understanding as to what Lady Emily *could*, or could *not* patiently bear.

In the street, Lord Henry encountered an old friend and schoolfellow, Mr. Sydney, whom he had not seen for some time; and anxious to present him to Lady Emily, invited him to dine with them *en trio*. When he came home, to escort her on horseback, he mentioned the pleasure he anticipated in making his chosen friend known to her.

"Sydney is an excellent fellow, and I am sure you will like him if only on my account, for he is one of my dearest friends."

Lady Emily looked disconcerted, but said nothing.

"How is this, love?" asked her husband,

"you do not seem pleased at my having asked Sydney to dinner."

"Why, to say the truth, I had anticipated so much happiness in a *tête-à-tête* with you, Henry, after that large, and dull party, yesterday, that I confess I *am* a little disappointed, however amiable your friend may be."

"He is a good-humoured, kind-hearted creature," resumed Lord Henry. "We travelled all over the continent together, lived in one house in London, while I was a *garçon;* and, in short, were for many years inseparable."

"Oh, yes! I remember you used to be continually praising him, and wondering whether he would like me," said the lady, with a countenance in which little symptoms of pleasure were visible.

"No, there you wrong me. I could not doubt whether he, whether every one, could resist liking my Emily; and I only hope she will like him; for I confess I should be annoyed, if my wife did not like the man I most esteem."

"I dare say we shall get on very well; only,

as I have before told you, I am not given to take fancies to strangers."

Lord Henry felt hurt and mortified at the tone adopted by his wife on this occasion; and the reflection it induced, led to a longer silence than usually occurred between them. Lady Emily was the first to break it.

"I suppose, Henry," said she, pettishly, "that your thoughts are so occupied by your friend, that you have none to bestow on your wife?"

"I was thinking, Emily, that I wished my wife evinced a more cordial feeling towards my friend."

Further private conversation was precluded by their being joined by two or three acquaintances, who left them not until they returned from their ride, when it was time to adjourn to dress for dinner.

When Mr. Sydney arrived, Lord Henry led him, with all the unceremonious cordiality of a brother, to Lady Henry.

"Emily has heard me speak of you so often," said he, "that she feels as if you were as old friends as we are."

The formal courtesy, and the top of her gloved fingers which met Mr. Sydney's out-stretched hand, ill accorded with this assertion; but Mr. Sydney, though somewhat checked in his friendly advances, attributed the coldness of his reception to the youthful timidity of the fair creature before him, whose exquisite loveliness justified his friend's taste, and disposed Sydney to like her.

"I met Aubrey yesterday," said Mr. Sydney, "and never saw a man so totally changed by wedlock as he is. He seemed afraid to show the pleasure he felt at meeting me, and positively shrank in dismay when I bantered him on some of our former joint follies. I have heard, that when a man weds, it is deemed necessary for him to change his servants, but I was not aware he should change his friends. How strange, that marriage should produce such a metamorphosis! But this is one of the mysteries of that holy state, which a *garçon* never can comprehend. You, I see, my dear fellow, are unchanged: thanks, I suppose, to the amiability of Lady Emily."

Had Mr. Sydney not been so exceedingly short-sighted, one glance at Lady Emily would have rendered him aware of the indiscretion he had committed; but unconscious of the change in her aspect, he continued to talk.

"How long it is, since we last met!" said Mr. Sydney, as soon as the servants having retired allowed a perfect freedom from constraint.

"How frequently did I think of you at Rome and Naples, where we passed such pleasant days together!"

Lady Emily looked displeased; and her husband observing the expression of her countenance, made an effort to turn the subject of conversation.

"I quite long to take Emily to Italy, and show her all our old haunts, Sydney," said he.

"Apropos of our old haunts," observed Mr. Sydney, "whom do you think I met at Albano, when I went there to seek a little fresh air, after having been half broiled by an unusually warm May at Rome? Can you guess?"

"I have not the most remote idea," replied

Lord Henry, with a look of such perfect indifference, as indicated he had no curiosity on the subject.

"Well, then, I encountered the bewitching widow as you used to call her, Mrs. Montagu Clifford, still in a state of single blessedness, though she had exhibited her white teeth, and sung her Spanish *letrillas* all over Italy. By the bye, she made kind inquiries after you, though I suspect you hardly merited them."

Lady Emily's cheek grew red, and she gave a glance of anger at her husband, that brought the scene of jealousy of the previous night forcibly to his recollection. Again he endeavoured to direct the conversation to other topics; but his wife observing his effort, far from showing any sense of gratitude, denoted by her angry glances her suspicion that he dreaded some disagreeable disclosure from the loquacity of his friend. She rose to withdraw, and, though affectionately urged by Lord Henry to stay with them a little longer, left the room; saying, she doubted not that they would be glad to have a *tête-à-tête*, to talk over their *agreeable reminiscences* of past times.

Lord Henry was ill at ease, as he marked the look of displeasure that clouded the countenance of his wife; and the anticipation of another scene of tears, sullenness, or reproaches, haunted his imagination so forcibly, that his friend at length struck by the air *distrait*, with which he listened to him, proposed adjourning to the drawing-room.

Arrived there, they found that Lady Emily had retired to her apartment, leaving a message with the groom of the chambers that a bad headache obliged her to withdraw.

"I must quit you, Sydney, for a short time," said Lord Henry, looking not a little disconcerted, "to go and see Emily; she has not been well of late, and was suffering all the time of dinner."

He sought his wife's dressing-room, not as hitherto, with lover-like steps of impatience; but rather as a culprit who dreads a reproof, though he had no consciousness of having given offence. Few things can be more disagreeable than this same anticipation of a lecture, or what is still worse, a cold or sullen reception, from a beloved object whom one is anxious to

please, yet who takes umbrage at trifles, and resents the imagined offence either by recrimination, silence, or tears. He felt an incipient dread of the time likely to elapse before he could return to his friend; the wearisome efforts to be employed to extract an avowal of the imagined grievance, the protracted chagrin of the grieved, and the necessarily prolonged attempts to console.

As these thoughts passed through his mind, he was almost tempted, *malgré* his sincere affection for his wife, to wish himself once more a bachelor, with all the comfortable independence, and irresponsibility attached to the state of single blessedness. He entered the chamber with even more than usual gentleness; but ere he had crossed its threshold, a signal from the self-important *Marabout*, indicated the necessity of a more stealthy pace.

"*Milor, miladi, est bien souffrante,* she have de megrin, de chagrin," whispered the *femme-de-chambre*, glancing reproaches all the time she spoke at Lord Henry; who felt a more than ordinary disinclination towards the attendant of his wife, on observing the air of

impertinent confidence assumed by her on this occasion.

He approached the *lit de repos*, on which Lady Emily reclined, and seeing that she slept not, he ventured to hope that her indisposition was not of a serious nature.

"I am very poorly," said the lady; "my head aches dreadfully; but pray do not let me detain you from your friend."

"If you really are ill, Emily, can you imagine that I could leave you? The supposition is unkind."

A dead silence followed this remark, broken only by the deep sighs of Lady Emily.

"Had I not better immediately send for medical advice?" asked Lord Henry, affectionately, and he took her hand in his. "There is, however, no symptom of fever in this dear hand," said he, and he pressed it to his lips.

"You surely ought not to leave your friend alone any longer?" said Lady Emily, with an air that denoted her expectation that her husband would reply, "What are all the friends in the world to me, when you are indisposed?"

"I will just go to Sydney, send him away,"

resumed Lord Henry, "and return to you immediately."

"No, really, I cannot permit you to sacrifice the pleasure of Mr. Sydney's society, in which it was previously quite evident you took such delight," said the lady; "for you had neither eyes nor ears for any one else during dinner; and remained so long with him after it, that I considered it not to be unlucky that my illness furnished an excuse for leaving you to enjoy your *tête-à-tête.*"

"How can you be so unreasonable — so childish?" asked Lord Henry.

"I think Mr. Sydney might have had the tact to forbear repeating his reminiscences of your bachelor days, and your *bewitching* widow, in my presence, at least," said Lady Emily; "for it cannot be agreeable to find the epithet bewitching, which I foolishly thought you had never applied to any one but me, has been lavished on a person who, judging even from the mode in which she was named, seems little better than a husband-hunting adventuress."

Lady Emily's cheeks flushed, and her eyes

sparkled with animation, if not anger, as she uttered this reproach

"Good Heavens, Emily! how silly, how absurd, thus to take offence where not the slightest was meant to be offered! Do you suppose I could, without compromising your dignity, and leading my friend to believe that you were weak and unreasonable, like too many other women, make him understand that references to my bachelor days are interdicted? Would you not have cause to be offended, if I told him your foolish susceptibility on this point?"

"There could be no necessity for such a measure, Lord Henry, had you, as you ought to have done, explained to your obtuse friend, that you wished to forget all your past life, and to remember events only from the date of our affection."

"Sydney would laugh at me were I to confess any thing half so ridiculous," replied Lord Henry.

"Oh! if you attach more importance to Mr. Sydney's opinion than mine, I have no-

thing more to say," and a cambric handkerchief was applied to the tearful eyes of the lady.

"Emily, Emily, why will you thus trifle with our happiness? What would you have me do to satisfy you? A short time ago, I little doubted that I should ever be compelled to ask the mortifying question, for I believed you were satisfied—were happy. Tell me what are your wishes, for I cannot endure the repetition of scenes such as these."

"I wish," replied the lady, her accents broken by sobs, "that you would avoid all those odious people with whom you lived before you knew me; and thus preclude the chance of my feelings being wounded by their indelicate reminiscences of a time when, as they would fain make me believe, you were gay, amused — nay, Henry — happy, without me; *me*, on whom you have said a thousand times within the last three blissful months, your happiness wholly and solely depended. I cannot, indeed I cannot, dear Henry, bear to hear them refer to your past life, when even the

idea that you could have lived without me inflicts torture!"

There was so much tenderness in this sentiment, unreasonable as the wishes of her who uttered it were felt to be by her husband, that the displeasure which her *exigeance* might have produced, was forgotten in the affection which it evinced; and still more softened by the appealing look of the dark, lustrous eyes, fondly fixed on his face, he pressed his lips on her fair brow, and called her his dear, his own Emily.

"I have quite forgotten poor Sydney all this time," said Lord Henry, "I really must go to him."

"Oh! Henry, how can you think of any one but me? Heaven knows I never bestow a thought on any other human being than you; yet here, even in the moment that I am disposed to forget the chagrin of the last three hours—chagrin that has weighed more heavily on my spirits than I can express—*you* can remember this tiresome friend of yours, who has caused it all. No, I never *shall*, never *can*

be happy, until you break asunder your odious bachelor friendships; forget all your previous life, and learn to think that you have only really, truly, lived since we have known each other."

Lord Henry felt a strong inclination to smile at this romantic notion of his wife, which however flattering it might be to his vanity, augured ill for his prospect of that good understanding, and freedom from constraint, which he thought such essential ingredients in the cup of connubial felicity. But he conquered the disposition to laughter, looked as grave as he could, and having again pressed the delicate little hand, held out towards him in a reproving posture, left the room to join Sydney; preparing sundry relations of the illness of Lady Emily, as an apology for his protracted absence. Truth to say, he felt not a little abashed at the consciousness of the ridiculous figure he should make while detailing these same apologies to his friend.

"Pshaw!" muttered he, "a bachelor can never understand these sort of conjugal embar-

rassments; a brother Benedick would divine the whole thing in a moment."

On entering the library, he found it empty; and, though relieved from the necessity of making false excuses, the thought that Sydney would be sure to go to his club, and account for his unusually early apparition there, by detailing the sudden illness of his hostess, and the absence of his host, with his suspicion of the cause.

"I shall be an object of ridicule among the whole club," said he, and this presentiment tended not to smooth his brow, as with no inconsiderable portion of irritation, he again sought the dressing-room of his wife.

"How kind, dearest Henry, to have dismissed our tormentor, and to have returned to me so soon! How did you get rid of him?"

"He saved me all trouble on that point," replied Lord Henry, with a look that denoted any thing but satisfaction, "by taking himself off."

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Lady Emily; "for I anticipated his staying at least half an

hour. But you don't look as if you participated in my gladness, Henry! Car it be possible that you prefer his society to mine?"

"I confess, Emily, that I *am* annoyed at his going off without any explanation. Sydney can be sarcastic, and comic too, when he pleases: and his version of my uxoriousness given to our mutual friends at the club, could not fail to draw their quizzical animadversions on us both."

"And this is the man *you* call your friend, Henry? How unlike *my* notions of one!"

"Sydney, nevertheless, has proved himself a very sincere friend, on more than one occasion, Emily."

"Yet you believe that he would be capable of turning you into ridicule at the club! This was not the sort of friendship that subsisted between dear Frances Lorimer and me. *She* would not, *could not* breathe a word to imply a censure on me. Ah! *ours* was, indeed, a true friendship! Did we not write to each other every day such long, long letters, always cross-lined? Did we not dress in the same colours, wear bracelets of each other's hair, and rings

with the same devices; dote on the same poetry, read the same works of fiction, like and dislike the same people? and in short, assimilate ourselves in dress, sentiments, and pursuits, until each had lost her own identity in that of her friend? And yet, Henry, this friend I have neglected, nay, I have forgotten, in the all-engrossing affection you created in my breast; while *you* can attach importance to the opinions of this Mr. Sydney, whom you admit to be capable of giving a sarcastic version of your attachment to your wife!"

"Your inexperience, Emily, unfits you for judging of mundane friendships. Those between men, are wholly different from the romantic, exaggerated, and unenduring delusions, named friendship, by girls in their teens, commenced in the school-room, and ended in the honeymoon."

"Mine for dear Frances ended not in the honeymoon; for was it not a sweet occupation, during the first days of our marriage, to write and tell her of my happiness?"

"But our honeymoon is scarcely yet over, Emily, and nevertheless, you confess that you

have neglected, nay, forgotten your friend. Now, I wrote no exaggerated accounts of my connubial bliss to Sydney, nor did he expect that I should. Yet our friendship has remained the same, ever since we left Eton together; and I confess I should be pained at its being diminished, or broken off, notwithstanding that I acknowledge my belief of his capability of quizzing my conjugal *faiblesse* to our mutual acquaintance at the club."

"Oh, Henry! it is so provoking to hear your worldly-minded sentiments on subjects so sacred as love and friendship!"

"Should you not rather say, Emily, that it is fortunate they are not more exalted; since, as you prohibit the indulgence of the latter, as being incompatible with the duties entailed by the former, an adherence to friendship would expose me to your displeasure?"

"You wilfully misunderstand me, Henry, *indeed* you do. No one attaches more value to friendship than I."

"Then why wish to wean me from Sydney?"

"Because he has no feeling, no sympathy, no tact."

"He is not generally accused of being deficient in these qualities, Emily, I assure you."

"And I persist, Henry, in thinking, that if he *really* possessed them, he would not, on the first day he was presented to your wife, refer in her presence to your bachelor days, and your bewitching widows; because none but an obtuse-minded man could be unconscious that a refined woman, fondly attached to her husband, could be otherwise than deeply pained at such reminiscences."

Neither parties were convinced by the arguments of the other; nay, more—each considered the other unreasonable. Mutual affection, however, operated as a soother, in this their second matrimonial dissension, as effectually as it had done on their first; and like an April sun which quickly dries up the showers that preceded its appearance, soon banished every trace of discontent, and again all was love and peace. But brief was the duration of this halcyon state. A late night in the House of Commons, led to as angry a debate between Lord Henry and Lady Emily, as is often witnessed *within* the House; and the disputants

stood in as much need of being called to order, as the most animated member who ever incurred and deserved the remonstrance of that much enduring functionary, the Speaker.

Quarrel No. 3, was not so easily adjusted as the former two; for domestic disagreements have this peculiarity, that each succeeding one finds those engaged in them less disposed to make or accept concessions. It were tedious to relate the arguments offered by Lady Emily, to prove that a husband who loves his wife, could not, or at least *ought* not, to attend the House of Commons; and the logical reasoning by which Lord Henry endeavoured to convince her, that he who discharged not his duty to his country, was not capable of being a loving spouse. Arguments, nay, even tears, were found unavailing to convince Lord Henry that his attendance at St. Stephen's was a just cause of unhappiness to his wife. He sternly persisted in his resolution to attend the House of Commons, when any subject of importance was likely to be discussed; and three days, felt to be of interminable length by Lady Emily, rolled

over their heads, before a perfect reconciliation was accomplished.

But alas! this estrangement of three days, led to a result that furnished cause for future dissension. The consciousness that a cold reception awaited him at home, induced Lord Henry, one night that the House of Commons had adjourned at an earlier hour than ordinary, to yield to the request of some old friends, to drop into their club and sup; and so agreeable did he find his companions, that he returned not to his home until daylight. Poor Lady Emily, who had impatiently counted the many hours of his absence, by the pendule on her table, met him with a face pale as marble, on which the effect of her late vigil and anxiety might be traced in legible characters. Her pallid looks were a reproach that his conscience whispered he had merited; and which might have been more effectual in precluding similar sins on his part, than any other means, had she trusted to them alone. But unfortunately, she recapitulated all she had endured; the hope that every step in the square, every sound

of carriage-wheels, were his; and the consequent alarm and disappointment that followed the frustration of these hopes. Men are seldom so little disposed to pity the sufferings they have caused, as when conscience tells them they have been in the wrong.

Lord Henry became *ennuyé*, as his *cara sposa* dwelt on the misery of her solitary vigil, and somewhat brusquely remarked, "that it might have been avoided had she more wisely sought her pillow. The house did not adjourn until very late; he could not get away sooner, and he hoped she would never again sit up for him."

"And this," thought Lady Emily, "is the consolation offered me for my anxiety, and the many hours of wretchedness undergone during this long, long night. Oh, Henry! who that saw you in our delicious dwelling, by the calm lake of Windermere, whose unruffled surface was not smoother than the current of our lives, and where an hour passed away from me, was counted as an infliction not bearable, could believe that you could thus change!"

The tears stole down her pallid cheek as she made this reflection, and bathed her pillow as she continued to ponder long after her husband had tasted the balm of sleep denied to her.

The next day, as they rode through the park, one of his companions of the previous night joined them, and referred to its agreeability.

"We got a very good supper, did we not?" said he. "No one can prepare a supper like Ude."

Lord Henry positively blushed, as the reproachful eyes of his offended wife were fixed on his face.

"Do you know," continued his friend, who was not *un peu indiscret et bavard*, "that poor Aubrey is not allowed to go to Crockford's, Madame *son épouse* thinking the frequenting of that agreeable club, incompatible with the dignified position of a married man. The consequence is, that Aubrey swears he never enters the place, yet contrives to sup there most nights on his way back from the House of Commons, and persuades his wife that he was detained at the house. Every married man

now endeavours to secure a seat in parliament, because it furnishes so good an excuse for late hours and absence from home."

Lord Henry looked as embarrassed as he felt, and heartily wished his indiscreet friend a hundred miles off; while Lady Emily felt as much indignation as grief, at thus discovering that the deception practised by other men, had been indulged in by him whom she believed to have been as incapable of finding pleasure in the haunts of his bachelor days, as of descending to a subterfuge to conceal his renewed attendance there. Trivial as this error of the husband may appear to some of our readers, it aimed the first blow at the confidence of the wife in his veracity—a blow so fatal to conjugal happiness. *He* felt all that was passing in her mind; and, with the unreasonableness peculiar to selfishness, was more disposed to resent the censure implied by her looks, than to atone for the cause of it.

He argued in his own mind, that as the duplicity to which he had descended had been instigated by what he called her absurd exigeance, his practice of it was consequently

compulsory. How many men have similarly reasoned, and how many women have provoked the same results by their imprudent expectations, and resentments when such expectations have been disappointed!

Never did a pair, who had only two months worn the chains of Hymen, enter their home with feelings less attuned to love than Lord Henry and Lady Emily. Mutual dissatisfaction pervaded the minds of both; yet, strange to say, this very dissatisfaction owed its bitterness and existence to an ill-regulated affection, which led each to expect in the other that freedom from error, rarely, if ever, accorded to weak mortals.

"I thought him so perfect," said Lady Emily to herself, "so incapable of falsehood. Oh! what a cruel disappointment!"

"How unjust! how absurd!" thought Lord Henry, "to resent as an injury the trifling deception produced by my desire of not giving her pain, which I knew my honest avowal of the supper at Crockford's, would have inflicted. Women are the most unreasonable creatures in the world. If one tells them the truth, they

pout or weep; and what man can patiently bear either of these feminine habitudes? If one conceals the fact, from the desire of saving them from annoyance, then, forsooth, the poor devil of a husband is, if detected, regarded as a monster of deception and falsehood, and punished for the very error into which a too compassionate disposition led him."

The *tête-à-tête* dinner, anticipated with pleasure by husband and wife, proved more disagreeable to both, than they, a few hours before, had imagined possible. Each dreaded a recurrence to the subject that pained them, yet could think of no other. The evening passed not more pleasantly than the dinner, and was felt by both to be interminable. What a melancholy contrast did it offer to the delicious ones enjoyed in their solitude, when they were all the world to each other!—before *she* had learned to doubt his truth, or he to dread or resent her displeasure.

The announcement that his cabriolet was at the door, was a relief to them. He muttered a few words of his regret at the necessity of leaving her; and, as his lips slightly pressed

her cheek, it required no little effort on her part to repress the tears that were ready to bedew them, while she silently and passively received, without returning his caress. It was not thus that they had been wont to part even for an hour. He would fondly loiter, unwilling to tear himself from her presence, and she would as fondly urge his stay. But now—all was changed, and they *felt*, but dared not revert to the alteration. The tears, repressed in his presence, flowed abundantly when Lord Henry left the house. They were the bitterest his wife had ever shed; for they mourned the death of those young and romantic hopes of happiness, the completion of which are to be found only in the pages of fiction.

While Lady Emily still continued to weep in uncontrollable emotion, the doors of the library were thrown open, and before she could discern who entered, she was fondly pressed in the arms of her sister, Lady Lutterworth. The senior of Lady Emily by three years, and nearly that period a wife, Lady Lutterworth had acquired all the experience which is the inevitable result of a constant intercourse with society. She, too,

had, during the first months of her marriage, wept over the destruction of those illusions peculiar to the young and romantic; illusions fated to be dissolved by the sober realities of life—and had learned to value the steady affection of the husband, which supersedes the more animated, but brief devotion of the lover. She had passed through the phases of the honeymoon, and noted the barometer of love, from extreme heat to variable, and found the quicksilver remain steadily fixed at temperate.—Nevertheless, though she might somtimes give a sigh to the memory of her departed illusions, she was satisfied, nay, more, was happy in her domestic life. Arrived but late that evening in London, from the continent, where she had been sojourning during the last two years, she could not repress her impatience to embrace the dear sister she had left budding into beauty when she last beheld her, and had hurried off in a *voiture de remise*, from the Clarendon, as soon as she and her lord had finished the late dinner that awaited their arrival.

"But how is this, dear Emily, you have been weeping?" were the first words uttered

by Lady Lutterworth, after having again and again pressed her sister to her heart.

"I've been nervous, and somewhat low-spirited," replied Lady Emily, and the tears streamed afresh from her eyes as she spoke.

"Where is Lord Henry? I long to become acquainted with my new brother," said Lady Lutterworth.

"He is gone to the House of Commons," answered Lady Emily.

"Which I dare say you find to be just as plaguy an affair as I used to consider the House of Lords the first year of my marriage, *n'est-ce pas, ma chère petite sœur?* Oh, how well I remember counting the long, dull hours, that I thought interminable, while my lord and master was discharging his senatorial duties, listening to the pungent satire of a Lyndhurst, or the bitter irony of a Brougham. I recollect, too, the heroic courage with which I resisted the attacks of the drowsy god Morpheus, for the praiseworthy purpose of being able to tell Lutterworth what a sleepless wretched night I had passed. I have struck my repeater, when so overpowered by drowsiness as to be almost in-

capable of counting its silvery sounds, that I might be able to acquaint my *caro sposo* how many, many hours I had counted. And then how offended, how angry I used to feel, when he has said, 'Why not go to sleep, Louisa? You would then have been unconscious of the tardy flight of time, and I see you can hardly keep your eyes open.' I *did* learn wisdom, *did* go to sleep, and acquired sufficient philosophy to be amused the morning after a late debate, in listening to a *résumé* of it from Frederick, instead of looking, if not uttering reproaches for his having occasioned me such long vigils."

"But where is Lord Lutterworth?" inquired Lady Emily.

"Indulging in a most comfortable *siesta*, in a chair which he has pronounced to be perfect for such indulgence," replied Lady Lutterworth. "He will then visit his club, hear the *on-dits* and become *au fait* of all that is passing in London, which will be retailed and detailed to me at *déjeûner* to-morrow."

"And does he indulge in these *siestas* in your presence?" demanded Lady Emily, her

brow elevated into an angular curve, indicative of displeasure and surprise.

"Does he *not!*" answered Lady Lutterworth. "Yes, my dear little sister, *et sans cérémonie, sans peur, et sans reproche.*"

"And *you* suffer it?" asked Lady Emily.

"Ay, more; arrange the pillow, and make as little noise as possible, lest I interrupt his slumber," answered Lady Lutterworth.

"But surely, sister, this is very undignified! We ought not to forego those attentions, those *petits soins,* to which we are entitled, and which form the *agrémens* of wedded life."

"Yes, Emily, during the honeymoon, perhaps; but be assured that the sooner a wife resigns these *petits soins* only voluntarily paid while she is yet a bride, the better will it be for her future happiness. Let her *receive* with pleasure every demonstration of her husband's affection, without ever *exacting* a single one. Let her ever welcome him with smiles, and conceal the tears his absence costs her. *If he will* sleep, and husbands have all a peculiar tendency to court 'tired nature's sweet restorer,

balmy sleep,' is it not wiser to ensure his gratitude, by administering all gentle appliances to render his slumbers agreeable, than to resent, though unable to prevent, the indulgence."

"But then, sister, we are so loved, so adored, during courtship, and the early days of marriage, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to bring ourselves to be content with the commonplace civilities, into which husbands allow their attentions to degenerate when the honeymoon is over."

"Wo to her, Emily, who cannot soon and cheerfully submit to be content with such! It is the false notions engendered during the days of courtship and the honeymoon, that lay the foundation for many, if not all the dissensions that too frequently imbitter married life. Men, the lords of the creation, forego their prerogatives, when they stoop to sue and propitiate those whom they believe themselves born to protect, if not to command. The object attained, for which this sacrifice was offered, they quickly resume their natural and ill-concealed sense of superiority, and begin to treat

her, whom they seemed to consider a goddess, as a creature sent into the world to contribute to their wants and wishes. A deposed monarch, driven from the throne where he commanded universal homage from his subjects, is not placed in a more false position, by expecting similar demonstrations of respect in exile, than a wife is, who exacts in the staid and unromantic position of a matron, the devoted attentions offered to her during the illusive hours of courtship and the first bridal days. Let then both the deposed sovereigns resign with 'decent dignity' the homage they can no longer command, and they will best ensure that continued regard which, though more homely, is not less precious."

The words of Lady Lutterworth made a deep impression on the mind of her fair young sister, who, the moment that lady retired, sought her pillow; and though a few natural tears dewed her cheeks, as she resigned the sweet but delusive hopes of youth and romance, which led her to imagine that the husband would ever continue the lover, she went to sleep

with the firm resolve of seeking content, and of conferring happiness in the discharge of her duties.

When Lord Henry returned from the House of Commons—and this night he did so without dropping in at his club—he found his fair young wife asleep, her cheeks still retaining the traces of recent tears. There was something peculiarly touching in the sight of that beautiful and youthful face, thus marked with sorrow, though under the blessed influence of sleep. The rich crimson lips still quivered, and broken sobs escaped them, like those of a slumbering child who had wept itself to unconsciousness; and a tear still trembled beneath the long silken lash that shaded the fair and delicate cheek.

Lord Henry stood in mute admiration, regarding the lovely object before him, and felt all the lover's enthusiasm and husband's tenderness revive in his heart, from the contemplation. His own name, uttered in the softest tone of affection, stole from the lips of the sleeper; and was followed by a sigh so deep as to agitate the snowy drapery that shrouded her finely-formed

bust. That sigh appealed more powerfully to his feelings, than the most eloquent speech could have done; and he reproached himself severely for having caused it.

"Poor, dear Emily!" thought he, "even in her dreams I am remembered. And I can be so unfeeling as to blame her disappointment at finding me so much less faultless than she expected! So pure a mind as hers cannot be expected to make allowance for the breach of veracity she has discovered, where she thought all was truth! And I, like a brute, could be angry, instead of endeavouring to soothe her wounded feelings!"

These salutary reflections produced a happy result. The morrow's sun shone on the reconciliation of Lord Henry and Lady Emily. He acknowledged the error into which a desire to avoid displeasing her had hurried him; he explained the sacrifices entailed by the conventional usages of fashionable life; the necessity of occasionally submitting to them; the expediency of a wife's cheerfully yielding to these unavoidable interruptions to domestic bliss; and by a perfect confidence in her husband, and

a freedom from exacting a monopoly of his attentions only practicable in the solitude of their country-seat, exempting him from the painful necessity of concealment or prevarication.

The tenderness with which his advice was bestowed, ensured its adoption. From that day forth Lady Emily learned to bear seeing her husband behave with the courtesy practised by every well-bred man towards women, without feeling any jealousy; submitted without uneasiness to his frequently engaging his old friends to dinner, nay, could smile at the mention of the "bewitching widow," and hear of his occasionally supping at his club without being made unhappy.

A letter despatched a few days after to her dear friend, Lady Frances Lorimer, in answer to one from that young lady announcing her approaching nuptials, contained such excellent advice on the danger of young wives exacting attentions only paid during the days of courtship, that it had the best effect on that lady. This judicious counsel considerably lowered the exaggerated and romantic expectations

she had previously indulged of the unbroken felicity of wedded lovers, and saved the husband of Lady Frances from the scenes of domestic chagrin that had clouded the conjugal happiness of Lord Henry and Lady Emily Fitzhardinge, during their first entrance as a wedded pair into fashionable life in London.

THE GAMESTERS:

A FRENCH STORY.



"Let no man trust the first false step of guilt,
It hangs upon a precipice,
Whose steep descent in last perdition ends."

"Such is the fate of guilt, to make slaves tools,
And then to make 'em masters by our secrets."

MADAME DE TOURNAVILLE was left a widow at an early age, with an only child, a daughter of ten years old, whose beauty and docility were as remarkable as a certain nervous temperament, that gave to her a shyness and timidity which checked the playful gaiety of childhood, and rendered her susceptible of fear on the slightest occasions.

The long illness of her husband, and the confinement and anxiety it entailed, followed

by her deep grief at his death, had so impaired the naturally delicate health of Madame de Tournaville, that in a few months she followed him to the tomb; leaving her daughter, with a large fortune, to the guardianship of a relation, the Comte de Breteul, who had been for many years the intimate friend of Monsieur de Tournaville, and the adviser of his widow during the few months that she survived him.

The Comte de Breteul was a widower with a son and daughter, both senior to Matilde de Tournaville by six or seven years. The young De Breteul was in the army, where he had already distinguished himself, and Louise his sister had but lately returned from the *pension*, where she had been educated, to preside over the establishment in the paternal mansion. Louise de Breteul was beautiful, gentle, amiable, and accomplished, with a steadiness and decorum remarkable for her years; and with manners whose suavity never failed to conciliate the good opinion of those who had opportunities of knowing her. She soon acquired the devoted affection of the youthful Matilde, and repaid it with sisterly attachment, and an unceasing care

bestowed on her education. The Comte de Breteul's exterior was more *distingué* than attractive; for though he possessed *l'air noble* in an eminent degree, his countenance was forbidding, and in spite of the polished elegance of his manners, repelled confidence and familiarity.

He occupied a fine hotel in the Rue de Varennes, Faubourg-Saint Germains, and lived in a style suitable to the large fortune he inherited from his ancestors. It was with pleasure that Louise superintended the studies of her interesting *protégée*, and with pride that she marked her progress in them. Matilde had a great facility in acquiring all that was taught her, and an affectionate and grateful manner of evincing her sense of the kindness and zeal of her instructors, that increased their exertions in the pleasing task. Her beauty, which had been remarkable from her infancy, developed itself with increased charms as she advanced towards womanhood; but the timidity of her character, instead of diminishing, appeared unhappily to become more fixed. The gazelle was not more shy than Matilde, nor more

graceful; for her timidity had nothing of *gaucherie* in it. Those who could have seen her chasing a butterfly in the garden among flowers scarcely more blooming than herself, or standing on the point of her delicate feet striving to peep into a bird's nest, while she held back the branches of the shrubs that concealed it, would have allowed that she looked like some fabled wood-nymph, whose element was flowers and sunshine. A strange voice or step never failed to alarm her, and send her flying, like a startled dove, to the side of Louise, whose presence always reassured her.

Louise de Breteul had refused several unexceptionable proposals of marriage, being determined not to leave her father, and above all, her young *élève*, until tempted by some offer in which her heart was more interested than in those she had already received. Time had passed with rapid strides, and Matilde was now entered on her sixteenth year. As yet she had seen nothing of the world, and Louise who preferred the calm enjoyment of the domestic circle to the gaieties that courted her abroad, had partaken but rarely of them. The

hours fled cheerfully and happily by, occupied in reading, drawing, music, and embroidery. It was a pleasing sight to behold these two young and lovely girls engaged in their daily avocations: Matilde seated by the side of her friend, would read aloud to her; while Louise, at the end of each page, commented on the passages, or in turn read to Matilde, while she exercised her pencil, and the freshly-plucked roses in the vase, which she loved to copy, wore not a brighter hue than graced her cheek, when Louise commended the fidelity with which she had transferred them to paper.

They would wander for hours through the umbrageous shades of the vast garden belonging to the hotel, watching the growth of the beautiful flowers and plants with which it abounded, and admiring the rare birds in the aviary, which they were accustomed to feed, and which sent forth joyful notes when they approached.

About this period, Gustave de Breteul arrived at Paris to visit his family, and was accompanied by a brother officer, the young Vicomte de Villeneuve, whose presence soon

seemed as gratifying to Louise as it was disagreeable to her father. He would observe the movements of his son's friend with an anxious eye, and if he conversed with, or seemed to show any attention towards Matilde, he became evidently discomposed, and almost stern towards the Vicomte de Villeneuve. The coldness of the reception given him by the Comte de Breteul prevented not the frequent visits of that young gentleman to the Hôtel de Breteul, and it soon became visible that he was more attracted there by the smiles of the fair sister of his friend, than even by the friend himself, warm and sincere as was his attachment to him. A mutual sentiment of the most tender nature had taken place between the Vicomte and Louise, which was soon revealed to the delighted Gustave, who loved his sister, and his friend better than aught else on earth, save a certain *demoiselle*, the only sister of that friend, to whom he had plighted his faith; having, during the last year, conceived for her a passion as sincere as it was reciprocal. In fact, his present visit was made expressly with the intention to solicit his father's consent to their

union, and his friend had accompanied him to give all the necessary information relative to the fortune and prospects of his sister. The attachment which the Vicomte de Villeneuve had formed for Louise, seemed to complete the anticipations of happiness that Gustave nourished in his breast, and he looked forward with feelings of delight to the double alliance of the two families. Gustave was about to solicit an interview with his father to lay open the state of his heart, when the Comte de Breteul required his presence in the library.

"I have sent for you, my son," said he, "to talk over future plans, in which you are deeply interested, and I flatter myself that in fulfilling them, you will find that I have not been unmindful of your happiness. For a long period I have decided on bestowing on you the hand of my fair and amiable ward, Matilde de Tournaville. Her person, all must admit to be lovely; her accomplishments, gentleness, and good sense, no one can doubt; and her fortune leaves nothing to be desired by the most prudent father. But how is this? you seem far from feeling the delight I had anticipated;

you have not, you cannot have, a single objection to urge against Matilde."

"Far from it, my father," replied Gustave; "no one can be more ready to acknowledge the charms and good qualities of Mademoiselle de Tournaville than myself; but my affections are bestowed on another, and when you summoned me to your presence, I was on the point of demanding an audience to declare to you the state of my heart—I love, and am beloved by the sister of my friend; and only wait for your sanction to ratify the vows we have interchanged."

"Do I hear right?" asked the angry father; while disappointment and rage strove for mastery in his agitated breast. "Is it thus that you would dash to the ground the hopes which I have so long indulged? But no! you cannot be so ungrateful, so selfish—you will, now that you know my wishes, abandon this silly project, and give your hand to Matilde."

"Never! my father," said Gustave, firmly but respectfully; "my vows are pledged to Elise de Villeneuve: her fortune—though to it I have not given a thought—is equal to that of

Matilde; her family is more noble, and therefore no reason can exist for declining a marriage on which all my hopes of happiness depend."

"Are my feelings, then," said the father, "to be counted for nothing? And how long is it since French fathers have ceased to exercise the right of disposing of the hands of their children? In England, where sons are so negligently educated that the heir of every noble house thinks he has a right to select a wife for himself, such infractions of duty may possibly occur; but in France, we are not yet arrived at this degree of licence; and I declare to you, that I never will consent to your marriage with any one but Matilde."

So saying, he quitted the room, leaving Gustave perfectly confounded by this first display of harsh parental authority, but fully resolved to resist it. He determined on writing a letter of remonstrance to his father; and unwilling to acquaint his friend with the unfavourable result of the interview, lest he should feel offended at the unaccountable objection of the Comte to the proposed union, he decided on leaving Paris for a couple of days, both to

afford time to his father to reflect coolly on his letter and give it a definitive answer, and to avoid meeting De Villeneuve, until he had received it. Writing, therefore, a brief note to his friend to apologize for his absence, he departed from Paris, a prey to gloomy thoughts, which formed a painful contrast with the joyful anticipations in which he had indulged only a few hours before.

Ignorant of the state of irritation into which his son's declaration had plunged the Comte de Breteul, De Villeneuve, with the permission of Louise, had sought him, and demanded her hand. An angry refusal, and an intimation that his future visits would be dispensed with in the Rue de Varennes, was the answer that awaited the disappointed and astonished lover, who left the library, the scene of his audience with nearly equally strong sentiments of dislike towards the father, as of passionate tenderness for the daughter. Previously to quitting the house he sought his beloved Louise, and in a few hurried words related to her the cruel disappointment he had encountered. He urged her to be firm, and should her father speak to

her on the subject, he implored her to avow with candour their attachment, and the conviction of its stability.

How had a few hours changed the happy prospects of the lovers! They were confounded by the unexpected turn affairs had taken; for so unexceptionable was the fortune and position of the Vicomte de Villeneuve, that a doubt of his proposals being listened to with pleasure by the Comte de Breteul, had never occurred to them. Louise felt this disappointment of the heart, with perhaps more severity, that it was the first she had known. Her feelings had not been deprived of their virgin purity by a succession of youthful fancies, each chasing away the recollection of the former; an evil which too often affects youthful minds, whose facility to receive impressions is in general greater than their power to retain them. Her attachment to De Villeneuve was her first lesson of love; she felt it to be indelible, and was overpowered with anguish at finding the obstacles that impeded her happiness. She waited with impatience the return of her brother,—he who alone could sympathize with her, could counsel, or

intercede for her. The feelings of this gentle and high-minded girl, which had hitherto preserved their even tenour, like some gliding stream flowing smoothly along, and reflecting only the fairest images on its glassy surface, were now like the mountain torrent, swollen by rains, and rocked by the tempest.

When Matilde, unconscious of passing events, approached her loved guide and protectress, to pursue the appointed studies of the day, it was only by a violent effort that Louise could assume an appearance of calmness. The force of her emotions struck her with alarm; and as Matilde displayed her drawings, or played some favourite air, to which she had endeavoured to give more than usual expression in order to win the commendations of her friend, Louise shrank abashed from the innocent and happy girl, self-reproved by the thought, that while she thus abandoned herself to the engrossing emotions that filled her heart, she was unhallowed for the part of monitress to one whose purity had never been sullied by passion.

Two gloomy days had tediously drawn to a conclusion when Gustave returned, and the

unhappy Louise poured into his sympathizing ear the disappointment with which her hopes had been crushed. He found a long letter from De Villeneuve, written under all the excitement of feelings which the interview with the Comte de Breteul was calculated to produce; and urging Gustave not only to give him a speedy meeting, but immediately to arrange for him an interview with Louise in his presence; declaring that to endure existence any longer without seeing her he felt to be impossible. He implored Gustave by the love he bore to Elise, by their long friendship, and by his affection for Louise, to grant this request. He proposed that they should meet in the garden of the Hôtel de Breteul, which could be arranged by their admitting him by a private door that opened into the Rue de Babylon. Gustave consented to this plan, and while they are conserting measures to carry it into effect, we must take a retrospective view of the circumstances that had led the Comte de Breteul to offer such an unaccountable opposition to the happiness of his children.

In early youth he had made what is called a

love-match, and during the brief duration of his wedded life had possessed a happiness that rarely accompanies marriages in the formation of which passion has had more influence than reason. The Comtesse de Breteul, on her death-bed, to which in a few fleeting hours a violent malady had conducted her, with the short-sighted selfishness of an ill-regulated affection, had extorted from her agonized husband a solemn promise that he would never give her a successor in his heart, or place over his children an alien mother. This request, framed by love, led, as we shall see, to the most fatal results, and drove from the pale of domestic bliss a man who might have dispensed and partaken that blessing. The first violent grief of the bereaved husband having subsided into the stagnant calm of morbid melancholy, he sought in vain to find relief in his former avocations. Books failed to give him their wonted solace, because every page of his favourite authors teemed with passages marked by the pencil of her he sought to forget; and the sympathy of their tastes, brought thus before him, renewed the overwhelming grief her loss

had occasioned. His home had now become unbearable to him, for it was fraught with images of the past. Her vacant chair opposite to his own; the tabouret on which her delicate feet used to repose; the vase, now empty, in which the flowers she loved were wont to adorn her table; the unfinished sketches from her pencil, still resting on the easel; and her harp standing where she had last awakened its tones, all—all, spoke to him of the happy past, and rendered the present insupportable. It was to fly from this state of gloomy grief that he sought forgetfulness in play; that fearful remedy which, like the poisons introduced in medicine, is so much more destructive than the malady it may banish. The excitement at first produced was such a relief to his harassed feelings, that he had recourse to it as the victim of acute pain flies to opiates, when suffering has conquered fortitude, and forgetfulness for a few brief hours is all he hopes to obtain. The fatal habit of play grew on him,—nay, soon became the engrossing passion of his life, until fortune, fame, peace, all were sacrificed to its destructive indulgence. His large funded pro-

perty, touched by the burning fingers of the reckless gamester, had melted like snow before the sun, and when Madame de Tournaville placed in his power the ample fortune of her orphan daughter, he stood on the verge of ruin, into which, without this timely aid, in a few months he must have inevitably been plunged. The gradations of vice are only imperceptible to the wretched dupe who passes through them. A few months before, and the Comte de Breteul would have spurned the idea, that he could be even suspected of risking the property of his own children, a property which he considered as a sacred deposit confided to his care; but *now* he blushed not to risk that of his youthful ward, and saw thousand after thousand of it disappear in the same fatal gulf which had swallowed up his own.

The Comte de Breteul had not lost the vast sums that had led to his ruin without having made acquaintances as disreputable to his fame as the pursuit by which he formed them was destructive to his fortune. Men of all countries, as ruined in reputation as in purse, had now become his associates; sums of money lost

to them, which he had not always the power to pay, had placed him in their disgraceful dependence, and they no longer felt under their former restraint in his presence. The Comte de Breteul, a naturally proud man, had not reached this humiliating state of degradation without frequent self-reproach, and sickening feelings of disgust; but the hope, the deceptive hope of regaining his losses, that hope which lures the gamester to destruction, still led him on. He had been living on credit for some months, and retained but a few thousand francs of the once large fortune of Matilde de Tournaville in his possession, when by the death of a relation a large sum of money was bequeathed to her, which was to descend to him and his children in case of her dying childless. This had occurred only a few days before the arrival of Gustave de Breteul at Paris, and the guilty and ruined father determined on forming a marriage between Matilde and his son, which would give him the power of appropriating at least a portion of this money to his own pressing exigencies, and prevent the discovery of his dishonest waste of her paternal fortune, as

he knew that both Matilde and Gustave would leave the whole of their pecuniary concerns to his management.

With this plan in view, the only one which offered a chance of concealing his dishonourable conduct, and its ruinous results, it may easily be imagined with what dread he watched the looks of the Vicomte de Villeneuve, trembling lest any attachment should be formed between him and Matilde, and with what anger he discovered his son's engagement to Mademoiselle de Villeneuve, which offered a bar to the completion of his plan. The marriages of his children in the family of De Villeneuve could not take place without the state of his fortune being made known; and once known, would they, could they be permitted by any prudent parents? Who would consent to receive the portionless son and daughter of a ruined, dishonest gamester? No, his gentle and high-minded Louise, and his honourable and impetuous Gustave, would be spurned by the parents of De Villeneuve, and *he*—*he* would be the cause of all this. There was agony, there was bitterness in the thought, and

the reproaches which his too lately-awakened conscience whispered almost avenged the crime that excited them. The unhappy man still loved his children, fondly, truly loved them: and perhaps the cruel injustice he had committed in reducing them to poverty, added poignancy to his affection; for remorse and pity were allied to his parental feelings.

This affection for his offspring, which, had he been untainted with the vice that had caused his ruin, would have been a source of the purest happiness to him, was now the instrument of his heaviest punishment; for the pangs of disappointed hope which he had inflicted on them in opposing their love, recoiled on his own heart, making him feel that he had brought misery on those whose felicity he might have insured.

He was writhing under repentance for the past, and terror for the future, when le Chevalier Roussel was announced, and *his* presence added poignancy to the bitter feelings to which the guilty Comte de Breteul was a prey.

Roussel was a *chevalier d'industrie*, who, though far from being *sans reproche*, was *sans peur*, and who had attained a proficiency in

the science he professed, never acquired but at the price of infamy. Luckily for society that it is so, the exposure which ultimately awaits such characters limits the power of plundering that their knowledge of the art might otherwise afford them. Gamesters, like alchymists, pass their lives in endeavouring to acquire gold, but never arrive at the end to which all else is sacrificed; and dazzled by alluring and magnificent dreams of ever-eluding riches, both close their days in equal disappointment and poverty.

Le Chevalier Roussel was a man so hardened in crime, that he had become almost reckless of its consequences. Never did temptation to commit any enormity, however heinous, present itself to him, but his moral turpitude and desperate fortunes prompted him to yield a ready assent; invariably consoling himself with the sophistical reasoning which had already led him into so much guilt, that a crime more or less in the long catalogue of his, was of no importance. He had passed the Rubicon of sin, and felt there was no returning; and this desperate consciousness of his irremediable ignominy prompted him to take a fiend-like

pleasure in luring others to pursue a similar course. He now came as an importunate creditor to the Comte de Breteul, determined to enforce payment *coûte qui coûte*. The haughtiness and ill-disguised contempt for Roussel and his associates, which that unhappy man could not always conceal, had engendered a feeling of hatred in the breast of the chevalier, which induced him to vow that he would humble the proud spirit of his arrogant debtor, by plunging him into *crimes* that would reduce him to a level with himself. Hitherto De Breteul was unstained by any other delinquency than his appropriation of the fortune of his ward, and the vice which led to it. He was ignorant of the arts by which he had been plundered, and had only advanced the *first* step in the career of a gamester, that of being the dupe, but had not yet arrived at that of being the defrauder, which, according to some writer, is the second and inevitable stage. In yielding to the crime of robbing his ward, he had disguised the enormity of the action to his paralyzed feelings of rectitude, by the sophistry of a vitiated parental tenderness, which whis-

pered that the course he had adopted was the *only means* of rescuing his children from poverty and shame. The conversion of all the affections intended as sources of happiness, into the acutest torments the guilty can experience, is but one of the fatal and certain consequences of crime. The love which the unfortunate man bore his offspring, now became the avenger of his vices; he shrank reproved before their untarnished integrity of mind, and received the proofs of attachment and respect they showered on him, with shuddering consciousness, that if they knew his guilt they would turn from him with shame and loathing.

Roussel found him almost maddened by the various and conflicting emotions which assailed him, and his presence and its cause served but to increase his excitement.

"Why, why have you come to my house?" demanded the comte. "Have I not forbidden you to appear here? You might have written to me, or trusted to our meeting at the usual place; but *here*, where my children and my ward reside, this is no fit place for *you*—that is, for *us* to meet;" added the alarmed man,

correcting the first observation, as the recollection of the power which his creditor possessed flashed on his mind.

"I must say that your reception is not very gracious," replied Roussel; "but I forgive it, because I see you are agitated—I am come for the money you owe me; I have forborne to press you for some days; but my wants are so urgent, that I can wait no longer."

It was in vain that the Comte de Breteul pleaded for time, even for a few days, to enable him to comply with this arrogant and hostile demand; Roussel was inflexible.

"I know all the intricacies of your situation," said the wily gamester, "you are ruined, irrecoverably ruined; you have not only spent your own fortune and that of your children, but you have robbed your ward—nay, start not," seeing that De Breteul was angered, "for he who hesitated not to commit the action has no right to take offence at the name. In a short time, the course you have pursued *must* be notorious, and what then will be your position? Branded by a crime that adds disgrace to the poverty you have drawn on your children, how could you

again meet them? But one way remains to save *them* from penury, and *you* from infamy."

"Name it, name it!" cried the agonized father (forgetting in his anxiety for his children, the indignation which the insolent familiarity of Roussel's observations had excited), "and if my heart's blood be the price, willingly, oh! most willingly shall it be paid."

"You speak idly," said the unfeeling Roussel; "of what advantage could your death be to your children? You can leave them no inheritance, but—shame! for, were you by suicide to evade the exposure that awaits you, your children must still bear the disgrace of your crime, which cannot be concealed. No, *your* death avails them not, but the death of—another, would save you and *them*."

"What! would you make me an assassin, base and wicked as you are?" asked De Breteul, while his cheek became blanched, and his lips trembled with emotion.

"You suffer your imagination to get the better of your reason, and of your good manners too," said Roussel, with a malignant scowl; "I am neither so base nor as wicked as yourself;

for I have plundered no orphan confided to me by a dying parent. Yes, yes, you may look as fierce as you please, yet you dare not deny the degrading accusation. You *have* violated the most sacred trust that man can repose in man; you *have* committed an act of dishonour that admits neither of extenuation nor atonement; and as a traitor to the dead, and the despoiler of the living, I denounce you! But come, it is useless for us to quarrel; our disunion will do more mischief than good perhaps to both of us; so let us remain friends," he added with an ironical smile, "for *yours* is not a position in which you can make an enemy with impunity."

Rage and shame struggled in the breast of the once proud Comte de Breteul, as he found himself, even in the lofty chambers of his noble ancestors, triumphantly bearded by the reckless miscreant, to an equality with whom his fatal passion for gaming had so unhappily reduced him.

"You are more alarmed by words than deeds," resumed Roussel; "you resent the accusation of your crime, but you shrank not from its commission, else would your ward be

now the heiress of a noble patrimony instead of being a defrauded pauper. You have spontaneously and remorselessly devoted her to beggary and humiliation; and yet, forsooth, in the redundance of your exceeding charity, you would hesitate, nay, turn in horror from the less cruel act of abridging the sufferings of the victim you have yourself created. She is young and innocent, therefore her transition from this world of care to a better and happier state, must be a desirable event. Let her live her natural time, poor and unfriended, what has she to hope, and what must she not have to endure? Her beauty will expose her to the snares of the wealthy and designing libertine; and her poverty will instigate her to become his prey. Remember, too, that a long life of misery and shame may await her; for degradation and infamy, though they murder peace of mind, but slowly undermine the physical sources of existence. You who have reduced her to the prospect of this career, can alone save her from its endurance, by sending her pure and undefiled to heaven. You will thus rescue your children from poverty, and all its humiliating attendants,

and yourself from everlasting disgrace—do you, *can* you hesitate? If so, take the consequences of your weakness; and remember, when it will be too late, that you had once the power of extricating your children and yourself from the retribution which now awaits you."

"I will not, I cannot imbrue my hands in innocent blood," said De Breteul, with horror depicted in his face; "all—every thing is better than such a crime," and he looked with terror at his hands, as if he already expected to see them dyed with the sanguine stream of life.

"Who talked of shedding blood?" said the crafty Roussel; "faugh—faugh! not I, I'm sure; such barbarisms are now exploded from civilized society. But let us not dispute about words; listen to me without interruption:—Mademoiselle de Tournaville dead, you succeed to the large property she has lately inherited. This will be amply sufficient to enable you to replace the fortune left her by her mother, to satisfy any inquisitive heir that may spring up, as also to leave a provision for your children; who, thus enabled to marry the objects of their choice, will bless you for their happiness. To

accomplish these most desirable results, you have only to send a soul to Heaven as pure as when it left the hands of its Creator. I am your friend; and can instruct you to extinguish the vital spark, so as leave no possibility of detection. The death of this young person is indispensably necessary to preserve your honour, peace—nay, your life; and yet in return for the accomplishment of an object so imperious, I only require you to pay me the sum of twenty-five thousand francs, in addition to the sum you already owe me, and which I must have forthwith."

The sophistry of Roussel, acting on the excited feelings of the fallen and guilty De Breteul, triumphed over the remaining sentiments of humanity in his demoralized heart. The proverb says, that they whom destiny would destroy, she first renders insane; and experience proves, that fate never wholly conquers man, until he has yielded up reason at the shrine of passion.

In the unhappy Comte de Breteul, we find another instance of the truth of this maxim. Hideous and glaring as was the fallacy of the

inculcation, yet his mind being prostrated by the conflicts and temptations to which it had been subjected, this wretched man, instigated by a knave more plausible, more crafty, and more callous than himself, was ultimately induced to implicitly believe, that in order to conceal the crime of appropriating his ward's fortune, and to preserve his children from disgrace, he was justified in laying on his soul the fearful crime of murder—of steeping himself in guilt a hundredfold more atrocious than that which he had already committed.

Let no one who has entered on the path of vice say, so far, and no farther will I go. The first step leads to destruction; for, rarely can the wretch who has taken it, extricate himself from its consequences.

But though De Breteul listened to the proposal of Roussel, it was long ere he could bring himself to do more than listen to it. To leave him thus conscience-stricken and alarmed formed no part of the plan of Roussel, and he insisted that his dupe should accompany him to a *restaurant* to dine; at the same time proposing that afterwards they should once more try their

luck at the gaming-table. Glad to escape from an interview with his daughter and Matilde, in his present state of mind, De Breteul left his house with Roussel, who having ordered a dinner *recherché*, and after it plied his companion with wine, disclosed to him his plan for destroying the beautiful and innocent orphan. He proposed to procure, from the mechanics by whom it is employed, a quantity of wax of a peculiar tenacity, and to spread it very thick on a piece of linen. De Breteul was to enter Matilde's chamber while she slept, and placing this preparation on her mouth, to press it tightly until it should produce suffocation, and yet leave no external marks of violence. Excited as he was by wine, and maddened by circumstances, still the mind of De Breteul recoiled from the perpetration of this atrocious crime; but the modern Mephistophiles, too skilled in all the fiendlike arts of temptation to allow himself to be baffled by either the apprehensions or contrition of his intended victim, led him once more to the gaming-table, that certain and fatal gulf of every manly virtue.

There, having by the same unfair means

which had already reduced him to ruin, despoiled him of the few thousand francs he yet possessed, with a heavy additional debt, desperation rendered him reckless; and he was ready, even eager, for the commission of any crime his betrayer might dictate. Armed, therefore, with the intended instrument of destruction, they returned at a late hour to the Hôtel de Breteul. And now we must leave them prepared for guilt, while we return to the other parties in this domestic tragedy.

It had been decided that the interview between the lovers and Gustave de Breteul should take place in the garden, when all the family in the hotel should be in bed, with the exception of the Comte de Breteul, who was in the habit of returning late. As he sometimes entered by the garden, it was also arranged that, to prevent his detecting the interview between his son and daughter and De Villeneuve, as soon as the latter was admitted by the small door, from the Rue de Babylon, the two friends, with Louise, should retire to the most distant part of the garden.

These arrangements having been narrated,

we must now proceed to the night of the intended rendezvous. Louise had retired to her chamber, which though it was next that of Matilde, looked on the court, while Matilde's opened on the garden. She was impatiently awaiting the signal concerted with her brother, for her to join him in his room, whence she was to pass into the garden, with which it communicated, when Matilde rushed into the apartment pale and terrified, declaring that she had heard voices at her window, and that she was afraid to remain alone in her chamber. It immediately occurred to Louise that the voices heard by Matilde were those of De Villeneuve and her brother, and anxious to join them, as also to quiet the alarm of the agitated girl, she desired her to enter her bed, and that, as she had no fears, she would occupy Matilde's; a proposal that was readily accepted.

Having left Mademoiselle de Tournaville restored to composure, Louise wrapped a shawl round her, and stole to the door of her brother's chamber, when she met him coming in search of her. They quickly entered the garden, found De Villeneuve at the private door, which

Gustave opened for him, and all three retired to a remote spot, where half an hour flew rapidly by, ere they had thought that even a quarter of that brief period had elapsed.

A heavy shower of rain induced Gustave to conduct the reluctant Louise to the house, and while she sought her pillow, and resigned herself to the balmy influence of sleep, he returned to his friend, and passed a couple of hours in discussing their plans for the present and the future. They were at length about to separate, and had approached the private door, when, to their utter amazement, they discovered a man with his hat drawn over his eyes, and enveloped in a large cloak, applying a key to the lock with one hand, while in the other he held a dark-lantern. They both rushed forward and seized him, under the conviction that he was a robber; while he, in evident trepidation, stated that he had entered the garden with the Comte de Breteul, and was retiring, making use of the key given him by that gentleman. There was an evident embarrassment and mystery about this person, that led them to doubt his statement, and Gustave insisted on his returning

with them to the house, in order that they might confront him with the comte. Finding them bent on this course, he was forced to yield, and turning to Gustave, he said,

"Well, be it so. You say you are his son. Now mark me; *he* will not thank you for this interference; but on your head be its consequences. A time may come when you will wish that you had not stopped me."

Gustave and De Villeneuve conducted the stranger to the door of the chamber of the Comte de Breteul, which, contrary to his usual custom, they found locked on the inside, and it was not until Gustave had repeatedly called to his father that the latter replied; but he still declined opening the door, and his voice betrayed evident symptoms of agitation.

The stranger cried aloud to him,

"De Breteul, I have been stopped, in leaving your garden, by your son, who holds me a prisoner until you have certified that I accompanied you into this house; was thence returning to my residence, and that the key I was employing for that purpose was confided to me by yourself."

" Yes, yes, my son, all that he states is correct," groaned rather than spoke the Comte de Breteul; " so let him depart in peace."

" Excuse," continued he, addressing the stranger, " the interruption you have met with, I pray you; for my son knew not that you were a—" "friend" he would have added, but the word died on his tongue. The rebuked young men looked at each other in silent amazement, and allowed the stranger to depart; who, darting on them a glance, in which every malevolent passion was expressed, hastily and in silence withdrew.

Gustave and De Villeneuve slowly left the ante-room, pondering on the extraordinary occurrence they had witnessed, and willing to give the stranger time to quit the garden ere they entered it. As they paced the gravel-walk, Gustave broke silence by saying,

" This is all very mysterious; I cannot comprehend how my father can hold intercourse with a man such as he who has left us; for if ever I saw villain written in the human countenance, it surely is in his."

De Villeneuve paused for a few minutes, and then replied,

"My dear friend, there is a subject on which I had intended to have spoken to you, but delicacy has hitherto induced me to postpone it; as, however, our rencontre with this mysterious stranger seems in some way connected with it, perhaps it is better that I should now disclose it. Your father is looked upon as a gamester—nay, more, report states him to be a ruined one. This stranger may be, must be, one of the wretches who frequent the gaming-houses, and who have aided and participated in his ruin. How else can we explain your father's intercourse with such a man, and the agitation which his voice denoted? This knave probably returned to-night with his dupe to the hotel, to receive either money or valuables for sums lost at play; and your father, ashamed to let the porter see him enter with such a companion, admitted him by the garden, and evidently intended that he should have retreated by the same route. Had we searched him, we should most likely have found either the contents of your father's

coffre-forte, or some vauable jewels; but, *n'importe*, it must be our business to relieve *the* Comte de Breteul from any distress he may have brought on himself by this fearful passion for play, and so terminate all interçourse between him and such dangerous and disgraceful associates as the man who has left us. I have a large sum of money in my own power, the fortune left me by my aunt; it shall be all at his service, and I, my dear Gustave, shall be but too happy if I can extricate from his present dangerous entanglements him who is the father of my Louise and of you, and who, I trust, may soon be mine and my sister's."

To find the parent, whom, from his infancy, he had reverenced nearly as much as loved, a reputed and dangerous gamester, was a cruel blow to the filial feelings of Gustave; and to see him the acknowledged associate of the vile person who had left them, was a severe humiliation; but the warmth of friendship displayed on this emergency by De Villeneuve soothed him, and while passionately thanking his warm-hearted friend, a strong sense of gratitude and

affection for a moment superseded his other too painful emotions. "Here," said De Villeneuve, "take this pocket-book; I had nearly forgotten it, though I brought it in consequence of the reports I heard, and the opinions I have formed of the extent of your father's pecuniary embarrassments. It contains half the sum at my disposal, and to-morrow the remainder shall be forthcoming. Nay, dear Gustave," seeing his friend hesitate, "do not pain me by a refusal. Are we not brothers as well as friends, and will not *your* father shortly be *mine?*"

Gustave yielded to the solicitations of De Villeneuve, and they parted, animated by cheering hopes of the morrow—that morrow so fraught with misery. But let me not anticipate.

De Villeneuve had reached the door of the garden, and was about to apply the key to the lock, when a sudden blow from a dagger prostrated him on the earth. Rapidly drawing the reeking weapon from the deep wound it had inflicted, the assassin struck it a second time into the body of his victim; then deliberately wiping it in the grass, he concealed it beneath

his cloak, and hurried from the spot, carefully locking the door after him, and taking away the key.

The Comte de Breteul and his son met in the breakfast-room at the usual hour on the following morning, the former with an embarrassed air and a care-worn brow, while his heavy eyes denoted that repose had been a stranger to his pillow. Gustave felt for him, and accounted for his troubled looks by the knowledge he had acquired of his pecuniary difficulties and entanglements. There was no recurrence made to the rencontre of the past night, and both laboured under a restraint that neither knew how to surmount, when the door opened and Matilde entered.

At the sight of his ward, a cry of horror escaped from the unhappy Comte de Breteul, and he fell fainting on the floor. Gustave and Matilde assisted to replace him in his chair, and animation had but just returned, when Claudine, the aged attendant of Louise, rushed distracted into the *salon*, and with cries of anguish and despair, announced that her dear

young lady, her precious Mademoiselle Louise, was dead!

The confusion, horror, and grief of the family may be imagined, but cannot be described. Gustave and Matilde flew to the chamber where the beautiful Louise lay extended, cold and motionless, but lovely even in death. The brother, nearly frantic, ordered the servants to fly for doctors, and commenced chafing her cold limbs, totally forgetting in this new and overpowering affliction the state of his father, when a party of *gendarmes* rudely entered the room, and made him their prisoner, on the charge of having murdered the Comte de Villeneuve in the garden on the previous night. They dragged him from the room, where lay the inanimate form of Louise, unmindful of his entreaties and frantic prayers to be allowed to continue his efforts to restore her, and forced him into the *salon*, where his wretched father continued in nearly a state of insensibility. They now examined his person, and on discovering the pocket-book of De Villeneuve, whose name was written in it, and the large sum it con-

tained, they declared that this evidence of his guilt was conclusive.

They subsequently, either casually or intentionally, added, that the anonymous information they had received that morning, stated that the pocket-book would be found in his possession, and that the body of the murdered man was concealed beneath some shrubs in the garden, where they had discovered it. When the wretched father heard the accusation against his son, the pride and idol of his life, he tried to speak, but the effort was unavailing; the powers of motion and utterance were paralyzed, and his son was forcibly dragged a prisoner from the house that contained a dead sister and a dying father.

Gustave was overwhelmed with horror by the accumulated misery of his maddening situation. The murder of his friend—that friend so fondly cherished, whose life he would willingly have sacrificed his own to have saved, seemed to add the finishing blow to his despair; and *he*—*he* charged with the murder! Oh! it was too, too horrible! and he closed his eyes

as if to shut out the dreadful images that presented themselves to his mind.

He had not been many hours in prison, though the mental sufferings he was enduring made them appear an eternity, when Claudine arrived to acquaint him that he had no longer a father, the Comte de Breteul having expired shortly after his son had been dragged from his presence.

"Father, sister, friend, all—all are gone!" groaned Gustave; "would to Heaven that I were with them!" and he threw himself in agony on the wretched bed on which he was sitting.

"No! dear Monsieur Gustave," said Claudine, "*all* are not yet lost; you have still a friend, for the Comte de Villeneuve yet lives, and the doctors say he will recover."

"Oh! God be thanked!" exclaimed Gustave; "tell me, tell me, my good Claudine, how this has occurred?"

"Why, my dear young master," resumed she, "when the comte was found, as they supposed, dead in the garden, he was only in a

deep swoon from loss of blood. He was soon restored to animation; and though he is very weak and languid, the doctors all say he will certainly recover. He has already spoken, and declared your innocence, God be praised! as also his knowledge of the assassin; so that in a few hours you must be released from this hateful prison."

To return thanks to the Almighty Providence that had preserved De Villeneuve, and justified himself from the foul crime with which he stood charged, was the first movement of Gustave; but soon came the bitter recollection of the death of his father and Louise, that dearly-loved sister and companion of his youth.

"My sister! my blessed sister!" exclaimed Gustave: "Oh! had you been spared me!" and a burst of passionate grief unmanned him.

"You see, my dear Monsieur Gustave," said Claudine, "the Comte de Villeneuve was *supposed* to be dead," laying an emphasis on the word supposed, "and yet *he* is still alive. God is good; so do not despair, for our precious mademoiselle *may* be restored to us."

"What do you, what can you mean, Clau-

dine? Oh! keep me not in suspense!" cried the agitated Gustave, "tell me, tell me, does she live?"

"Be calm, my dear young master, prepare yourself for joyful news. She does live, and you shall soon see her. Under Providence, the dear Mademoiselle Matilde and I saved her; for by friction and restoratives we had elicited signs of life before the doctors came, and they say she will recover if she is kept quiet."

The joy of Gustave may be imagined: he hugged the good old Claudine again and again, and it was only on recollecting the death of his father that he could check the transport which the recovery of his sister had occasioned. He hastily dismissed Claudine in order that Louise might not be deprived of her care, and sat him down to reflect on the occurrences of the last few eventful hours.

A short time brought the order for his release from prison, and he flew to his home, where he found his sister much better than his most sanguine hopes had led him to expect. The only account she could give of her sudden

seizure was, that she was awaked from sleep by a sense of suffocation, and when she tried to move, her endeavour was violently repressed by some person who forcibly held her, until her struggles were terminated by insensibility. The appearance of the mysterious stranger in the garden recurred to the recollection of Gustave, and suspicion that *he* was in some way connected with the tragic events of the previous night, rushed to his mind. These suspicions were confirmed by De Villeneuve, who told him that as the moonbeams fell on the countenance of his assassin when he gave him the second wound, he recognised in him the miscreant whom they had discovered in the garden. The meeting between the friends was most affecting. The danger to which Louise had been exposed, was concealed from her lover; lest in his present languid state, a knowledge of it might occasion an excitement which should be prejudicial to his recovery.

When Roussel and the Comte de Breteul had reached the chamber in which they supposed Matilde to sleep, her guardian had not sufficient resolution to enter it; and therefore,

on the hardened Roussel devolved the commission of the murderous task, which his wretched and vacillating accomplice dared not even to witness. Thus, the panic-stricken slave of conscience, he remained coweringly on the threshold, while his own daughter was attempted to be made the victim of her parent's guilt!

Just as the fiend-like assassin conceived he had completed his atrocious crime, he was alarmed by the sound of voices in the garden. He hastily removed the hateful mask before the final extinction of the vital spark had been effected, and then carefully wiped from the pale face of the unfortunate girl all stain and discoloration, until not a vestige remained of the means that had been employed. De Breteul, overcome with feelings of remorse and horror, and shrinking from the sight of the murderer, after a few hurried words of promised reward, let him out of the house, giving him the key of the garden-door; and then overcome with terror, had locked himself in his chamber. The recontre of Roussel with his son appeared to his guilty conscience as a

certain clue to the detection of his crime, and he passed a night of such fearful torment as had shaken his frame, and death already waved his dart over him.

The sight of Matilde, whom he believed dead, achieved the blow; but ere he sank under it, he had the misery of beholding his son seized as a criminal, and of meeting his fate without a friend or relation to close his dying eyes, yet happy in thus escaping the infamy his crimes merited.

When Roussel had left the presence of the friends on the fatal night, he concealed himself in the garden, in the hope that chance might disclose to him some portion of their intentions. The result answered his expectations, for he overheard all their conversation. He thus discovered that the gaming propensities of the Comte de Breteul were now known to his son, and that the plan suggested by De Villeneuve of assisting him with money, would probably extricate his dupe out of his hands. This knowledge alone would have been sufficient to instigate him to the commission of any atrocity; but his rancorous mind was still further ex-

cited by the disgust and antipathy the friends had exhibited towards himself: and thus impelled both by apprehension and malignity, he determined to remove the one and gratify the other, by murdering De Villeneuve and accusing Gustave of the crime. The pocket-book and money given by De Villeneuve, if found on Gustave, would, he felt certain, be received as conclusive proof of his guilt. He retired to his lodging, wrote a note to the *commissaire de police*, informing him of the murder, and then resolved to absent himself for some time from Paris, fearing that the Comte de Breteul, in the horror of seeing his son accused of murder, might betray the other fatal part of the tragedy, and implicate his safety.

On leaving Paris, Roussel directed his course to Mantes; where, having remained a few days, he took an outside seat on the *Diligence* to return, and was *one* of three people killed by the overturning of that vehicle.

Thus perished, within a week from the period of his double attempt at murder, a wretch whose life had been one long tissue of crime, and with him was buried the secret of the guilty partici-

pation of the Comte de Breteul, whose children were thus happily saved the deep and enduring misery which must have arisen on their knowledge of their parent's infamy. In a few months the double alliance between the houses of De Villeneuve and De Breteul took place, and they enjoy all the felicity they deserve. The amiable Matilde has found a husband in a near neighbour of De Villeneuve's, and continues as much attached as ever to her dear friend Louise, whose society constitutes one of her greatest sources of happiness.

Nothing now remains except to wish our readers all the blessings enjoyed by our heroines and heroes, but without their trials, and to impress on their minds the counsel to *Beware of gaming.*

THE COQUETTE

A TALE.



CATHERINE SEYMOUR was the prettiest girl at Cheltenham, and of this fact no one seemed more fully aware than the young lady herself; yet, strange to say, each new proof she received of it, in the admiration she excited, appeared to give her as much satisfaction as if she had been sceptical as to the extent and power of her personal claims,—a scepticism of which no one suspected her. There are some passions that increase with their gratification. Ambition and avarice are of this number; but the thirst for admiration is still more insatiable, and, if once indulged, is rarely if ever satisfied. Of this truth the vanity of Catherine Seymour

offered an example. Left with an only sister, orphans, at an early age, they had been confided to the care of an aunt fully competent to the task of superintending their education, and forming their minds, had she found Catherine as docile and unspoilt as her sister Frances, who was three years her junior; but, unhappily, Catherine had imbibed, from a vain and weak-minded mother, the pernicious belief of the supremacy of beauty, and the no less pernicious conviction that she possessed beauty of no ordinary degree. Her aunt endeavoured, but in vain, to correct the overweening vanity of her niece; but it had taken too deep root ever to be eradicated, and its consequences exposed her not unfrequently to the ridicule of her enemies, and to the pity of her friends.

Catherine was now in her twentieth year, and boasted of having achieved nearly as many conquests as she had numbered years; the last three Cheltenham seasons had witnessed her triumphs, and various had been the admirers assigned to her by the ephemeral visitors of the place. Still she remained unmarried, and unsought in marriage,—a circumstance that

astonished herself much more than it did any of her acquaintances, who proclaimed that she was too great a flirt and coquette to be sought for any longer partnership than that of a ball.

Frances had now completed her seventeenth year, and though much less brilliantly attractive than her sister, it was generally remarked that the admirers who were drawn to Mrs. Seymour's by Catherine's beauty, were retained by Frances's *naïveté*, gentleness, and animation. Many had been the young men who had, on a first acquaintance, entertained thoughts of seeking Catherine in marriage; but the second or third ball of their *séjour* generally opened their eyes to the ruling passion of the young lady, who thought it absolutely necessary that each new comer should yield homage to her charms, and sought this homage so openly as to disgust the admirers previously acquired, who were shocked at witnessing the coquetries directed to others that each had thought so agreeable when himself was their only object.

Catherine's vanity for a long time rendered her unconscious of any diminution in the attention of admirers, or the transfer of them to her

sister; for as long as the places of the seceders were supplied by new flatterers, she thought not of them; but when, at the close of the fashionable season, she found herself neglected, and saw Frances securing unequivocal marks of regard from those who had once sought her own smiles, she felt a sensation as new as it was painful to her vain mind, and endeavoured by every means in her power to win back her former admirers.

At this period arrived Sir Richard Spencer, a handsome young man, of ancient family, large fortune, and agreeable manners. He had only lately returned from a continental tour, and had come to Cheltenham to visit an uncle who had been his guardian. No sooner had he seen Catherine than he became fascinated by her beauty, and her sparkling vivacity riveted the chains that her charms had thrown over him. For a week he danced with her every night, rode with her every day, and saw his attentions received with such apparent pleasure, that he only waited a longer acquaintance to declare himself a suitor for her hand. His uncle had observed all this partiality with no slight por-

tion of alarm; for his annual visits to Cheltenham had made him acquainted with the coquettish propensities of Catherine. Had he, however, been slow to remark them, his notice however could not fail to have been called to them by the uncharitable inuendoes, piquant jests, and sapient predictions of the mothers and aunts of all the young ladies with whom he came in contact, who, in virtue of their consanguinity, take peculiar pleasure in animadverting on the errors, imagined or real, of the reigning belle of their *coterie*, from the disinterested motive of making them generally known to the marrying men.

Mr. Sydenham hesitated whether he should inform his nephew of the besetting sin of Miss Seymour; for being a man of the world, he had not reached his fiftieth year without having observed that the interference of friends and advisers often only serves to accelerate the marriages it was meant to avert, and he hoped the arrival of some new admirer might furnish his nephew with ocular demonstration of the fact he wished to impress on his mind, namely, the habitual coquetry of Catherine. When, how-

ever, he saw the intimacy daily increasing, and that the season drew near its close without offering any new beau as a rival, anxiety for his nephew induced him to ask Sir Richard if the reports in general circulation of his attachment to Miss Seymour were correct, "or merely," added Mr. Sydenham significantly, "like the various reports which have assigned the young lady to half a dozen different suitors every year that I have been here."

Sir Richard blushed and looked embarrassed, for there was something in the remark and tone of his uncle that displeased him; but quickly recovering himself, he replied, that he certainly admired Miss Seymour very much, thought her a charming person, but that as yet he had not proposed to her, though he had nearly determined on so doing in a few days. Alarmed for his nephew's future happiness, which he thought could not fail to be compromised by such a marriage, Mr. Sydenham lost sight of his usual coolness and judgment, and with more warmth than discretion, revealed every particular he had seen or heard of the coquetry, that all agreed to attribute to the

young lady. The natural consequences ensued. The lover defended with much more warmth than the uncle attacked; nay, the injustice, as he imagined, of the censures passed on Catherine, only served to increase his affection.

He left Mr. Sydenham's house and proceeded directly to that of Mrs. Seymour, which he quitted an hour after as the accepted lover of her niece. The terms of intimacy on which Sir Richard had been received at Mrs. Seymour's had given Frances an opportunity of appreciating his various good qualities and powers of pleasing, until she had unconsciously learned to regard him with feelings of interest much stronger than she was aware of.

The first moment that she became sensible of this, was when Catherine, in the flush of gratified vanity, burst into the room where Frances was practising at her harp, and proclaimed that she was the affianced wife of Sir Richard Spencer. "I shall be so happy," added Catherine; "for he has a fine house in Grosvenor-square, and a magnificent place in the country. He is to have the family jewels reset for me, and will write by this post to order two new

carriages. This is delightful—don't you envy me, Frances? Fancy how I shall outshine all those who have been giving themselves airs here!"

Frances hardly dared to trust herself with words, so overpowering and new were the emotions that overwhelmed her; but on pressing the cheek of her sister, her tremulous lips breathed forth wishes for her happiness as sincere as if that happiness had not been secured at the expense of her own, as she at that moment felt it to be. In all the gay anticipations of the future, amidst self-complacent recapitulations of the splendour that awaited her, the good qualities of *him* who was to bestow them, were never alluded to by Catherine; and Frances could not suppress a sigh as she reflected that, had it been *her* happy lot to have been chosen by Sir Richard Spencer, himself, and not his possessions, would have been the chief object in her anticipations of happiness.

Mrs. Seymour rejoiced in the prospects of her niece; but could not conceal from herself that they promised a more brilliant future for Catherine than for him who was to share them;

and she thought with regret, that a day might come when the ardent lover might have cause to lament his choice.

The gentle Frances, in the privacy of her chamber, schooled her heart to conquer this its first predilection; and when she met Sir Richard, and was addressed by him as his future sister, she stifled the pang that struggled in her breast, and offered him her congratulations with kind cordiality. But still each day discovering some new quality, or some fresh trait of amiability in her sister's suitor, increased the admiration and esteem for him that had become rooted in the pure and fresh feelings of Frances; and it required a constant effort on the part of the innocent and unhappy girl, to conceal the preference she had so unconsciously entertained from him who had excited it, and those who surrounded her. Often did she pray for the speedy completion of the marriage, thinking that when it had taken place, and that Sir Richard had become indeed her brother, her feelings towards him would alter; and she firmly resisted his and her sister's proposal to accompany them to London

when the ceremony should be over, being determined to avoid living under the same roof until she had conquered her fatal attachment.

Catherine, now sure of her conquest, no longer took the same pains to retain that she had taken to acquire it. She seemed to receive the attentions of Sir Richard as a right rather than as a pleasure; and as he saw more of her in the domestic circle, he was struck with the conviction, that the most sparkling belle of a ball-room is not always the most agreeable companion at home. The undeviating sweetness of temper and mild cheerfulness of Frances made themselves observed by the contrast they offered to the petulancy and not unfrequent vapidness of her sister, who wanting the excitement of fresh admiration, often sunk into inanition, or shewed unequivocal symptoms of *ennui*—little flattering to the *amour propre* of a lover, though not sufficiently marked to give him the right of resenting them. Had he known the effort it cost Frances to assume a cheerfulness of manner, when her spirits were bowed down by the consciousness of an attachment she felt it was a crime to indulge, how

much more would he have esteemed her, and how infinitely valued the self-command—one of the noblest qualities a woman can possess—that thus enabled her to perform the duties to those around her, and to contribute to their happiness, when she had ceased to look forward with hope to her own!

Sir Richard was summoned to London by his solicitor for the final arrangement of the marriage settlement, and the day before his departure, when walking with Catherine and her sister, they met a young man of fashionable, but unprepossessing appearance, to whose rude stare and familiar nod Sir Richard Spencer returned a very cold bow. "Who is that?" asked Catherine, whose experienced eye, at one glance, detected a man of fashion in the stranger, and whose vanity was gratified by the fixed stare with which he regarded her.

"That," replied Sir Richard, "is Lord Wilmingham; we were at college together; but he is a man whose reputation and manners I so much disapprove, that I avoid all intercourse with him as much as possible."

Three or four days after Sir Richard's

departure, the last ball of the season was to take place, and, to the surprise and displeasure of Mrs. Seymour, Catherine announced her intention of attending it. In vain her aunt and sister dwelt on the impropriety, now that her marriage was announced, of going to a ball in the absence of Sir Richard. She was obstinate, and thinking herself freed from the jurisdiction of her aunt, persevered in her intention; and Mrs. Seymour was obliged to accompany her, to prevent her placing herself under the protection of some less unexceptionable *chaperone*, as she intended to have done in the event of her refusal.

They had only been a few minutes in the room, Catherine glittering with ornaments presented to her by Sir Richard, and attracting general admiration by her beauty and animation, when Lord Wilmingham approached with Lady Severn, who presented him to Mrs. Seymour and her nieces. He immediately engaged Catherine's hand for the next dance; and, to the surprise and indignation of Frances, she observed her giddy sister receiving with undisguised pleasure, his marked attentions. Mrs.

Seymour noticed this conduct with equal pain; and made several signs to Catherine that she was drawing the eyes of all around on her by her flirtation; but the wilful girl persevered, and had the imprudence to continue to dance with Lord Wilmingham, even when custom required a change of partners.

At the end of the second dance, Mrs. Seymour joined her niece, and endeavoured by the coldness of her manner, to check the forward and presuming attentions of Lord Wilmingham; but it was evident the encouragement given him by the young lady rendered him careless of the disapprobation of the old; and he continued near Catherine, engrossing her conversation for the greater part of the evening.

They had no sooner entered the carriage to return home, than Mrs. Seymour reprehended her niece for the levity and impropriety of her conduct. Catherine angrily asserted her right of receiving what she chose to call the polite attentions of any or every person who offered them. The discussion ended like the generality of discussions when one person is in the

wrong, yet determined not to avow it—in mutual displeasure; and Catherine retired for the night, with the fixed determination of giving Lord Wilmingham every opportunity of cultivating her acquaintance; while Mrs. Seymour felt equally decided on prohibiting it.

Frances sought her sister next morning, and with affectionate mildness, reminded her of what Sir Richard Spencer had said of Lord Wilmingham; and that, having so spoken, he would naturally feel displeased at finding that his affianced wife had formed an acquaintance with him in his absence. Catherine petulantly disclaimed Sir Richard's right to control her actions until the marriage had taken place, adding, that circumstances might prevent its ever taking place; and when Frances shewed her surprise and displeasure at this comment, she triumphantly demanded whether it would not be more eligible, as well as agreeable, for her to be Countess of Wilmingham, than the wife of a simple baronet; adding, that Lord Wilmingham was much more to her taste in every respect than Sir Richard. "But," said the heartless coquette, "I shall not discard

the latter until I am quite sure of the former; so don't look so alarmed Frances, for I know what I am about." In vain were Frances's representations of the dishonourable conduct her sister was pursuing, that sister was determined on following her own selfish plans; and they parted mutually dissatisfied.

Frances, while grieving over the heartlessness of her sister, and the unhappiness its possible consequences might entail, was angry with herself for feeling that the effect it would produce on Sir Richard touched her more deeply than that which it would have on the destiny of her sister; but no one selfish hope or sentiment entered into her pure mind, though love, that promoter of selfishness in so many breasts, reigned triumphantly in hers.

When Lord Wilmingham called at Mrs. Seymour's door next day, he was not admitted; and Catherine, who anticipated this denial, took care to let him see her at the window, and to show, by the cordiality of her salutation, that his not being received was not *her* fault. When the ladies walked out in an hour after, he immediately joined them, and not all the cold

looks and constrained manner of Mrs. Seymour and Frances, could chase him from the side of Catherine until he had escorted them back to their home. The next day he called again, was again refused admittance, and, as on the former day, Catherine exhibited herself at the window, expressing by her looks and gestures how much she regretted not being allowed to receive him. Such evident encouragement would have led a much less presuming man than her new admirer to persevere in his attentions. But Lord Wilmingham wanted no such encouragement. He seldom reflected on the possible effects of any of his actions either towards others or himself: the gratification of his own selfish enjoyments occupied all his thoughts, and to accomplish any plan that led to them, he would stop at no sacrifice, except that of self. Devoted to pleasure, he sought it in every shape in which it presented itself to his eyes or imagination; and in his chase of the *ignis fatuus* which for ever lured him on, many had been the victims who were left to weep over their credulity and his perfidy. A violent hatred to Sir Richard Spencer had been

engendered in his mind, on observing a year or two before, the marked coldness with which his advances to a renewal of acquaintance were declined by the baronet, and he only waited an opportunity of avenging his mortified feelings. He came to Cheltenham with a dissipated young man of fashion of his acquaintance, and the day after was struck with the beauty of Catherine, when he saw her walking with Sir Richard. Public rumour soon made him acquainted with their engagement, and with fiend-like malice, he determined to seek an introduction to her, and to follow it up by attentions that could not fail to offend the baronet, even if they did not succeed in shaking the fidelity of his betrothed.

The absence of Sir Richard, and Catherine's own levity, soon furnished the unprincipled libertine with an opportunity to follow up his plans; and the first night of their acquaintance, in the brief space of a few hours, with insidious compliments, half avowals of love, and affected broken sentences of despair at her engagement, he made the infatuated and vain coquette believe that she had inspired him with a violent passion, and that she had only to break

through her engagement with Sir Richard to have the coronet of Lord Wilmingham offered for her acceptance. The encouragement given him by Catherine far surpassed his hopes; with a single glance he penetrated her character; for his own bad qualities rendered him quick-sighted, and furnished him with an unerring clue for discovering those of others. At moments he almost determined to discontinue his attentions, and let the marriage proceed, thinking that such a wife would be sure to be the severest misfortune that he could desire to befal his enemy; but then his vanity urged him to persevere, that he might humiliate and wound the feelings of Sir Richard, by winning the affections of his betrothed mistress, when he fancied himself most sure of them. Though he admired the beauty of Catherine, he felt no stronger sentiment towards her than mere personal admiration. She was one of the last women he would have selected for a wife, as, in this respect, he followed the wisdom of the wicked, if wisdom can ever rest with such, in requiring in those with whom they would connect themselves that virtue and goodness to which they are conscious

of not possessing even a claim in their own persons.

Catherine was to be made the instrument of this unprincipled man's vengeance on her affianced husband; and, when this was accomplished, he cared not what might become of her.

Finding Mrs. Seymour's precautions deprived him of seeing Catherine, he determined to write to her; and having observed she was continually at the window or balcony that looked towards the road leading from Mrs. Seymour's suburban villa to Cheltenham, he decided on being himself that evening the bearer of a letter, which he intended to throw up to the balcony.

Sir Richard having terminated his business sooner than he anticipated, left London without apprizing his fair friends at Cheltenham, intending to give them an agreeable surprise, by presenting himself at the villa when they least expected him, and was approaching it when, in the twilight, he observed a man throw something up to the balcony, and a female immediately after advance to speak to him. The noise his horse's steps made were evidently

heard by the persons, for the female quickly retreated from the balcony, and the man, who could not conceal himself, Sir Richard having come too suddenly upon him, proved to be Lord Wilmingham. Astonishment and indignation took possession of his mind, and his first impulse was to stop him; but Lord Wilmingham galloped quickly away, and Sir Richard entered the house, surprised and alarmed at what he had witnessed.

The possibility that the woman who was carrying on a clandestine correspondence with the worthless Lord Wilmingham might be his own Catherine, his affianced wife, had never, for a moment, suggested itself to his imagination. No, that was beyond the pale of possibility; but he instantly concluded that it was Frances, and was shocked and grieved, beyond measure, that one so young, and whom he had considered so pure-minded and amiable, should have degraded herself, with a person of whose reputation and bad conduct he had informed her. He found Mrs. Seymour and Catherine in the drawing-room, and the agitation the latter discovered on his entrance, was viewed by him as

a flattering proof of the effect his unexpected arrival produced on her; but when, in a few minutes after, Frances entered the room, and on seeing him (not having heard of his arrival) blushed deeply, trembled, and then turned pale, he could not suppress a marked coldness of manner at what he considered the indubitable proofs of her conscious guilt; and, during his visit, she frequently found his eyes fixed on her face with an expression of severity, as new as it was painful to her. Not wishing to commit her with her aunt, until he had first spoken with Catherine, and tried the efficacy of his own representations to Frances, he contented himself with merely remarking, that he had met Lord Wilmingham near the villa; and stealing a glance at Frances, observed her cheeks suffused with blushes, while Mrs. Seymour discovered evident symptoms of discomposure. Had he looked, at that moment, at Catherine, her visible embarrassment must have struck him, but having judged poor Frances guilty, he confined his examination to her.

"Lord Wilmingham is a most dissolute and

unprincipled young man," added Sir Richard, with warmth, "and a most improper acquaintance for ladies. When I saw him so near your abode this evening, I feared he might be received by you on visiting terms, and I regret not having more strongly warned you against him before my departure.

He stole another look at Frances, and found she blushed more than ever; while Mrs. Seymour replied, that Lord Wilmingham had been presented to them, but that Frances having told her Sir Richard had expressed a dislike and disapprobation of him, she had declined his visits. "Does this young creature, then, add hypocrisy to levity and imprudence?" thought Sir Richard, and the indignation he felt was expressed in the stern glance be cast at Frances, who, observing it, became more confused and agitated than before.

When he came to the villa next day, he found Frances alone, and immediately, in a grave and brotherly tone, remonstrated with her on the danger and impropriety of carrying on a clandestine correspondence, and with a person whose bad reputation she had herself

communicated to her aunt. The alarmed girl demanded an explanation, and he angrily told her all that he had seen the night before. She trembled, turned as pale as death, and appeared ready to sink to the earth; and he, pitying what he considered to be her feelings of shame, took her hand with kindness, and promised that if she would break off all correspondence with Lord Wilmingham, he would recur to the subject no more; and hastily left the room to go in search of Catherine in the garden, leaving Frances more dead than alive.

"And must I lose his esteem too," sobbed the unhappy girl, "and be considered by him as having pursued a conduct abhorrent to my nature? All but this I could have borne;" and tears of wounded pride and delicacy gushed in torrents from her eyes. "Oh! could I be but vindicated in his eyes! But no! this never can be, without exposing *her* he loves, and making him wretched by the discovery; and I will bear all rather than that he should suffer."

This is woman's love, when woman is, as nature meant her to be, pure-minded and un-

selfish; her own sufferings appear more easy to be borne than that of him she loves; at least, she is always ready to make the experiment when she thinks it can save him.

Frances sought her sister when Sir Richard had retired at night, and with tears and burning blushes declared the humiliating suspicions to which the improper conduct of that sister had exposed her.

"You did not, I hope, undeceive Sir Richard?" said the selfish Catherine; "for what he thinks of your proceedings can be no sort of consequence to *you;* but if, after all, I should marry him, it would be very disagreeable to have him discover that it was *I*, and not *you*, who was the object of Lord Wilmingham's attentions.

The unfeeling and indelicate selfishness of her sister shocked and disgusted Frances, who, having entreated her never again to see Lord Wilmingham, under pain of telling the whole truth to their aunt, left her to seek in her own chamber, the only consolation that now awaited her—the consciousness of having acted as she believed she ought.

A sleepless night, and the agitation she had experienced, affected the health of Frances so much, that the next morning saw her on the bed of sickness, unable to rise; and when Sir Richard came in the evening, he found Mrs. Seymour in great alarm, the physician who had been called in having pronounced Frances in a high state of fever. Mrs. Seymour and Catherine being in attendance in the chamber of the invalid, Sir Richard was left alone, and occupied himself in turning over the leaves of some albums until it became too dark to see. Waiting to bid Catherine adieu before he retired for the night, he reclined on a sofa in a recess near the window, and fell into a slumber, from which he was awakened by voices from the balcony. Half asleep and awake, he had not time to move, when the following dialogue struck his ears, and he became rooted to the spot as he listened to it:—

"No, I tell you positively, I will not marry Sir Richard," said Catherine, "even though the day is fixed. I never liked him, and *now* I dislike him more and more every day."

"But may I rely on you?" said a voice,

which Sir Richard instantly recognized for that of Lord Wilmingham.

"Yes, yes—I promise never to have any one but you," replied Catherine; "but only fancy," continued she, "that stupid Sir Richard saw you throw the letter the night before last on the balcony, and fancied that it was Frances who took it up; he lectured her, and the simpleton, luckily for us, let him remain in his error. She thought this heroism entitled her to the privilege of scolding me, and has given me a lesson worthy of aunt. But that is not the strangest part of the business; the agitation caused by all this has brought on a fever; under the influence of which she has revealed—but no, you would never guess, so I must tell it to you —nothing less than that she is in love with this stupid Sir Richard. But hush! did I not hear some noise? Go away, and come back at the same hour to-morrow night."

Sir Richard had listened with breathless horror and astonishment to this dialogue; but when the injustice he had committed towards the pure-minded and excellent Frances was revealed, and her passion for himself was dis-

covered, his arms involuntarily dropped on the sofa; and this was the noise that interrupted Catherine's revelations, and made her dismiss Lord Wilmingham. For a moment he was disposed to approach the balcony, and shew the unworthy pair that he had heard the whole of their conversation; but a little reflection taught him, that in so doing, Catherine would be aware of his having heard her sister's secret, and that thus the delicacy of Frances would be wounded. He therefore remained quiet until his faithless mistress had passed out of the room; and then seizing his hat, he left the house offering up fervent thanks that he had discovered, ere too late, the duplicity, meanness, and total want of principle of her whom he had regarded as his wife, and filled with admiration for the amiable Frances, and anxiety for her safety.

He wrote a brief and explicit letter to Catherine next morning, acquainting her that he had seen her interview with Lord Wilmingham the night before, and declining all pretensions to her hand, he left her to explain the cause to her aunt, and for ever broke off the

projected alliance. The vain girl for a short time rejoiced at his dereliction, believing that she should now become the wife of Lord Wilmingham; but when having despatched a few hurried lines to that worthless man, announcing the fact, she received only a cold billet saying that he was called to France on business of importance, and wishing her all happiness, without even so much as hinting that they should ever meet again, her vanity and want of principle received its own punishment in the deep humiliation which the frustration of all her ambitious hopes entailed on her.

In a few months, Frances became the happy wife of Sir Richard Spencer, and is now the no less happy mother of four lovely children; while Catherine continues to exhibit her faded charms at Cheltenham, with as little prospect of changing her name as her character, and is pointed at by moralising mothers and warning aunts, as a fearful example of the dangers of coquetting.

THE

BEAUTY AND HER SISTER.

PART I.

"BE sure, Rainsford, not to let Miss Emily put up her veil while she is walking, and keep her in the shade as much as possible," was the prohibition uttered by Lady Mansel to the upper nurse, previously to the morning promenade of the young lady.

"But *why*, Mrs. Rainsford, may I not put up my veil?" asked the child in a few minutes after, when this prohibition was referred to by the attentive nurse. "I am so warm, and I want so much to see all the pretty primroses, cowslips, and daisies around us, and this disagreeable veil does so torment me, making every

thing look as green as itself, and clinging to my lips every time I open them."

"Then *don't* open them, miss," was the reply of the sapient nurse, an advice that her youthful and lively charge was but little disposed to follow.

"But *why*," reiterated the child pertinaciously, "may I not put up my veil, as well as sister does hers?"

"Because your mamma is afraid that the sun would spoil your complexion, miss."

"Why will it spoil mine more than sister's?"

"Miss Mansel's skin is not so fair as yours, miss; and therefore, my lady is not so particular about it."

"Then I'm sure I wish that mine was as brown as the gypsy's we saw the other day, if I might but walk in the sunshine, and see the beautiful flowers, without this tiresome veil."

"You'll not wish that, miss, when you're grown up to be a woman."

"Yes, but I shall though, for what's the good of being fair?"

"It makes people handsome, miss."

"And what's the good of being handsome?"

"It's a great good, miss, for then they are admired."

"But grandmamma says it is better to be good than handsome, and loved than admired. What is the difference between being loved and admired, Rainsford?" asked Emily.

"I'm sure, miss, I hardly know," replied Rainsford, looking puzzled.

"That's what you always say," rejoined Emily poutingly, "when I ask you a question."

"Well, then, miss, as far as I knows, the difference is—one admires those that are handsome, and loves those that are good."

"But could not one be handsome and good too, Rainsford?" demanded Emily, with a look that indicated a consciousness of being the first.

"I suppose it's very difficult, miss, seeing as how there are so very few in the world that are both."

"Grandmamma says that beauty is far inferior to goodness," said Emily, "for that on goodness depends our happiness."

"Her ladyship is right," said Mrs. Rainsford

complacently,—for Rainsford, be it known to our readers, was a plain woman,—" 'handsome is as handsome does,' say I, 'and beauty is but skin deep after all,'" continued she.

"Then sister is *not* handsome, and that's the reason why she is allowed to walk out without a veil?"

"I didn't say she is not handsome, Miss Emily," said Mrs. Rainsford, alarmed.

"I thought you did," replied the acute child, with a thoughtful air.

"No, indeed, Miss Emily, I said no such thing; and I should get into great trouble if you told Miss Mansel, or my lady, or the Dowager Lady Mansel, that I said so."

"But *why* should you get into trouble if I told them?"

"Because *no* lady likes to have it said that she is not handsome."

"But if it is true, then ladies would not be vexed?—for grandmamma says people should always speak the truth."

"Not about people's *looks*, miss, I assure you, for it would offend many."

"Then it is only good to speak the truth about *things*, and not about *persons*,—is that what you mean, Rainsford?"

"Indeed, Miss Emily, you do so puzzle me with your questions, and you take one up so, that there is no knowing how to answer you, so I won't say another word while we are out;" a resolution to which the embarrassed Mrs. Rainsford adhered, while the *naïve* Emily was left to pursue the reflections which the preceding dialogue had given birth to in her mind, and which conduced to the philosophical conclusion,—that to be fair, was a great drawback upon enjoyment, as it entailed the necessity of always wearing a veil in the sunshine, and the newly acquired worldly wisdom, that people disliked being told they were not handsome, however true the assertion might be.

Another year saw Miss Emily transferred to the care of Mademoiselle Lavasseur, a French governess, and now commenced another species of annoyance, to which she was subjected by her beauty. Miss Lavasseur was not only extremely plain, but had a physiognomy that would for ever have excluded her from being

selected by a disciple of Lavater's for the post she now filled. A consciousness of her ugliness, though it failed to engender humility, gave birth in her envious breast to an unconquerable dislike to all who possessed beauty; hence, Emily became the object of her aversion and injustice.

The injudicious exhortations of Lady Mansel, not to permit Emily to study too much, for fear of injuring her eyes; not to allow her to draw, or write, except standing, lest it might contract her chest; not to play the harp or pianoforte, though for both these instruments she had evinced considerable talent, lest the points of her fingers should be flattened, increased her dislike to her young charge.

But, *en revanche*, Emily was permitted to devote more than double the usual time given to the acquirement of such an accomplishment, to her *maître-de-danse*, that her carriage and movements might be improved, their natural grace, though remarkable, not satisfying the false and fastidious taste of her lady mother. Miss Mansel being destitute of personal attractions, it was resolved that their absence

should be atoned for by the most assiduous cultivation of her mind; her ill-tempered governess urging her to increased attention to her studies, by injudiciously reminding her that *she* was *not* a beauty, and consequently, must be well educated. The system pursued towards both the young ladies, was calculated to produce the worst results; but fortunately, neither of them had bad tempers, and the good sense of their grandmother served as a corrective to the evil influence that presided over the school-room.

"Beauties may be allowed to be ignorant," would Mademoiselle Lavasseur often say, looking spitefully at poor Emily, as she sat in a listless posture, her small mouth frequently distended to a yawn, induced by the *ennui*, arising from want of occupation; an observation that never failed to bring a blush of humiliation to the cheek of the elder sister, and of shame to that of the younger.

"Are all beauties silly, grandmamma?" would Miss Mansel ask; a question which led the good old lady to an exposition of the manifold dangers to which beauty subjected its

possessors, not the least of which, consisted in the erroneous belief, often entertained, that its presence rendered the cultivation of talents and acquirements unnecessary. Emily's *naïve* interrogation of, "Are all clever people disagreeable, grandmamma?" called forth a reply that convinced her that clever and disagreeable were *not* synonymous terms, however much the conduct of Mademoiselle Lavasseur,—who was vaunted by Lady Mansel as a model of cleverness,—had led the child to that conclusion.

"Hold up your head, Miss Emily, and turn out your feet. Why bless me! how ungracefully you are lounging in your chair," was the often repeated remark of the governess.

"I am *so* tired," uttered between a sigh and a yawn, was the general reply.

"Tired, indeed! and with what, pray?—with doing nothing, I suppose."

"Yes, I believe so; for I do *so* want to have something to do."

"Well, then, sit straight, turn out your feet, and unravel this floss silk, it will occupy you; but mind you hold it with the point of your fingers, lightly, airily, not as a housemaid holds

her duster, but as a lady ought to hold whatever she touches. And you, Miss Mansel, you also seem fatigued."

"Yes, mademoiselle, I am a little tired. I have learned so many lessons to-day that they are all mixed up in my head together, just as the pieces of my dissected maps are, when I shake them over the table. I can't remember any one of them distinctly, and the confusion this causes in my head makes it ache," replied the jaded girl, whose pale cheek and heavy eyes bore evidence to the truth of her assertion of fatigue.

"But remember, *ma chère*, that when you go to dessert, your mother will examine the progress you have made during the day; and how gratifying it will be, while people are remarking the beauty of your sister, as they are continually doing, that *you* also get some praise. This will be the reward of your diligence, *ma chère*, and is it not worth studying for?"

"Grandmamma told me," said Miss Mansel, thoughtfully, "that the object of instruction was to strengthen the mind, and not for the display of acquirement."

"Your grandmamma is an old lady, who goes little into society, and consequently knows nothing of the present mode of thinking on such points," replied the superficial and flippant governess. "*Nous avons changé toute cela*, I can assure her ladyship, and people are now only anxious to acquire what they can show off; on the same principle that our shopkeepers in France lay in little more stock than they can exhibit in their windows."

As the lessons of Miss Mansel were repeated aloud to her governess, her sister received the benefit of oral information, to which she listened with interest, as a relief from the tedium of idleness,—hence she gained a general elementary knowledge; and not having, like her sister, a number of tasks to learn by rote, the information she thus attained became fixed in her mind. Miss Mansel was a prodigy of accomplishments, but in the art of thinking,—that art so little cultivated in modern systems of education,—she was totally unversed. Her mind was filled with a mass of crude and undigested knowledge, over which she possessed no power. It was like a lumber-room, in which things, not

in actual use, were stored away, but being piled one on another without order or method, it was difficult to get at any of them when required; while her sister, whose knowledge was so much more limited, could reason and reflect on that little, and render it available.

At seventeen, Miss Mansel was introduced to the fashionable world; and, in the course of a short time, was celebrated as a young lady of great accomplishments. Her drawings were honoured by the approbation of an illustrious personage, herself remarkable for her love of, and skill in, the art of design, and were pronounced worthy of the admiration of all the cognoscenti. Her performance on the harp and pianoforte, was allowed to rivalize with that of the most scientific performers of the day; and she spoke French, Italian, German, and Spanish, quite as fluently as if she could *think* in any of these languages,—a power denied her in them, as well as in that of her native one. In short, Miss Mansel resembled an automaton wound up to go through a certain number of exhibitions, all of which she performed with precision; and this, in fashionable circles—the only society she

frequented—was amply sufficient to satisfy those who look not beyond the surface, of the just claims the young lady possessed to the applause with which her exhibitions were crowned. The admiration which the musical talents of Miss Mansel excited, induced her vain mother to give frequent concerts, at which most of the celebrated public singers of the day were invited to assist, and all the extensive circle of her fashionable acquaintance were present. It was fearful to see this young and innocent girl placed by the side of opera-singers, whose *vices* were tolerated for the sake of their voices; and disgusting to mark the easy familiarity with which some of these signors and signoras returned the condescending politeness of their patrons.

Miss Mansel not only soon became inured to the public exhibition of her musical talents, but the applause they excited became necessary to her enjoyment. All her other accomplishments were neglected, that this one should have more time bestowed on its cultivation; and she submitted, without murmuring, to a fatigue nearly equal to that to which the professional singers,

with whom she was so constantly brought into contact, were subjected.

"I shall follow your advice, and propose to Miss Mansel," said Lord Westonville, a bachelor of forty, to his lady mother.

Certain symptoms of a want of renovation in both health and purse, had led his lordship to adopt this prudent resolution; but he was willing to lead his mother to imagine, that in the adoption, he was wholly influenced by her advice.

"She is no beauty, it is true," continued he, with something like a sigh (for he still retained some portion of his youthful predilection in favour of good looks); "but she is an admirable musician, and sings charmingly."

"Yes," replied Lady Westonville, "she is, indeed, a most accomplished young woman, and let me tell you, such are the most rational companions after all. For my part, I am astonished that men can be so silly as to marry beauties—(her ladyship had never been one)—but such folly generally brings its own punishment. Look at Lord Leominster—see what he got by marrying a beauty; then there is Mr. Marly,

what a position is he placed in! and all forsooth, because he *would* marry a beauty—I have no patience with such fools!" and the good old lady got angry at the bare recollection of the folly on which she commented.

"Well then, the die is cast," said Lord Westonville; and, in truth, had he not so frequently cast the *die*, he had not been compelled to seek a rich wife instead of a handsome one; "To-morrow I will make the offer." The offer was made, and accepted eagerly by Lady Mansel, to whom the ancient *noblesse* and high fashion of the suitor were irresistible attractions; and calmly by her daughter, whose most pleasurable anticipation of the future, arose from the power she concluded that her marriage would confer, —of giving *many*, and going to *all* the *récherche* concerts of every season. She thought with complacency, of the vast extent of the library at Westonville-house, and fully decided on dislodging the precious *tomes* that filled it, and converting it into a *salle-de-musique*, where she should preside, surrounded by applauding *amateurs* and envious professors. When bantered by some of his *roué* companions on the prospect

of his becoming a Benedict, Lord Westonville would laughingly assert, that he would acquire *harmony* at least, by the change, and that he gained *notes* in every way by the arrangement, —while the bride elect declared that she would give *such* concerts as would excite the envy of all London.

The marriage soon took place, "the happy couple,"—as the newspapers announced them to be,—were whirled off with all due celerity to his lordship's country seat, where the new made matron was delighted by finding a ball-room affording ample space for a *salle-de-musique*, large enough to hold five hundred people *comfortably*, as she styled it.

"But where are they to be found?" asked her lord; "and where are the performers to come from?"

"Can we not manage it, as easily as they do the musical festivals, in the provincial towns?" was the sapient reply of the lady.

"Why, not *quite* so easily," rejoined Lord Westonville, "the performers being, in the cases you allude to, paid from the funds received from the audience; and, as I conclude your

ladyship—(and he uttered this with a smile approaching to a sneer)—does not intend to *sell* admissions to your concerts, the expense of those on the extensive scale you propose would be far too great for most private fortunes, and certainly for mine; so you must make up your mind to be satisfied with performing to a very limited audience, while we are in the country."

We will leave the "happy couple to pass the honey-moon," with as little discord and as few jars as may be expected between two persons so little formed to play a duet together; while we return to Emily, the unaccomplished beauty, now installed in all the honours of a successful *débutante*, for fashionable celebrity, much to the satisfaction of her lady mother, and the great delight of herself. Admiration followed her steps wherever she turned; every girl with pretensions to beauty,—and many *without* any cause for such,—adopted her *coiffure*, while affecting to depreciate the face it so well suited. Robes were named *after*, songs written *on*, and *galoppes* and *mazourkas* composed *for her*. The newspapers "prated of her whereabouts" with all the flattering unction with which these

signs of the times first dictate to the public, and then re-echo its voice. No one *off the stage* ever danced so well as the beautiful Emily; and this her *sole* accomplishment (we mean no pun,) made *dancing* the rage during the hottest summer ever remembered in London. She insured the brilliant success of a fancy-fair, by the announcement of her intended presence; and the sale of an annual, by granting her portrait for its frontispiece. She bore her blushing honours joyously, if not meekly, satisfied with herself and the world—that is, the fashionable world, the only one of which she knew any thing. Life seemed to her as a continued festival, during this the first season of her entrance to society. Fête followed fête, and ball—ball, interrupted only by operas, plays and concerts. A train of admirers hovered round her at night, at every party she attended, and caracoled beside her carriage as she was driven through the Park, to the excitement of no slight portion of envy in the breasts of her contemporaries, if not competitors.

Many were the aspirants for her smiles, and

some of the number were well disposed to seek her hand; but as yet, no one of her admirers satisfied the ambitious views of her mother, who, in the plenitude of her wisdom, made high rank and great wealth (two advantages that, of late years, rarely meet in the same person), indispensable requisites in the fortunate man who was to possess the hand of her beautiful daughter. Among the crowd of admirers there was one, whose air *distingué* and fine countenance had excited a more than common interest in the mind of Emily.

At the first two or three balls at which they had met he had been her partner, but after that, though she saw him at every ball given during the season, he sought her hand no more, and only noticed her by a formal bow. This piqued her curiosity,—if it did not do more; and more than once she involuntarily looked towards him, but quickly turned her eyes in another direction, on finding his fixed on her face, with a glance that betokened evident admiration. How strange, that he should appear to admire, and yet not approach

her! And frequently did Emily find herself endeavouring to solve this unaccountable conduct of his.

Henry Wilmot, for so was this gentleman named, occupied more of the thoughts of the beauty than did all her admirers put together. She was not in love with him, it is true, but she was very well disposed to become so, provided she had any good reason to think that *he* loved her; for Emily possessed a large share of modesty and maidenly reserve, and was of the same opinion as Lady Mary Wortly Montague, who, in her verses to Sir William Younge, says—

> "Our wishes should be in our keeping,
> Till you tell us what they should be."

Though, by the bye, and *par parenthese*, Lady Mary was, at the moment she wrote the said verses, violating the decorum she praised, as the lines that follow those we have quoted contain a decided declaration of love for the baronet, which drew from him as decided a rejection and rebuke as ever was written. No; Emily was not a girl to let herself love a man, however captivating, who had not professed

himself *captivated*, though she did think oftener of Henry Wilmot than she had ever thought of any of his sex.

The season drew to a close, and many a disappointed hope and aching heart marked its rapid flight. The streets became hotter and more deserted; the mignonette was running fast to seed in all the windows of the fashionable squares and streets; and the flowers, nearly as faded as their mistresses, were no longer redolent of sweets, but nearly covered with dust, drooped their withered petals over the *jardiniers* that they lately adorned. Dense clouds of dust, and unsavory odours assailed the eyes and olfactory nerves of those who went into the streets, and the Park resembled a vast sheet of too often washed nankeen, the sun having "made the green" one dingy yellow; over which the smoke-dried trees waved their dusty leaves. A few carriages still rolled along, in which sat young ladies, straining their eyes to catch a view, *en passant*, of the last *beaux of summer*, the Lord Johns, Henrys, and Edwards, the partners of many a ball; and a few fair equestrians might still be seen cantering along;

while groups of young men were arranging their parties for grouse shooting in Scotland, with all the animation that the prospect of a change of scene and habits never fail to produce in the sybarite minds of such idlers. Here and there might be seen some gallant gay Lothario, with pale-yellow gloved hand resting on the door of a britscha, whose mistress listened with anxiety to the whispered plan of meetings, at whatever place her liege lord intended to take her during the autumn; and husbands were assiduously looking after—not their own—but the wives of their friends, and arranging visits at their different chateaux during the partridge and pheasant shooting.

Many a fair cheek had lost its bloom, and many a heart its peace, during the last three months; and many were those, who now going into the distasteful solitude of a country-house, or the more distasteful amphibious existence of a watering-place, carried with them the memory of blighted hopes and remembered errors, while, perhaps, the selfish men who had led to both, were anticipating with pleasure a total change of scene, and an escape from the shackles, either

imposed, or threatened to be imposed, on their freedom. Long bills and long faces were prevalent; husbands looked sulky, fathers morose, mothers grave, and young wives melancholy. But, alas! for those who wished to become wives, and saw the day of departure draw near, with the conviction that the part of the old proverb which states that "man proposes and God disposes," is untrue now-a-days; for never were men so little given to proposing, except it be at *écarté*,—they, indeed, were in a most pitiable state!

How did the sombre perspective of the paternal mansion, with its diurnal occupations, and long drowsy evenings, alarm them! The grassy parks, with their noble old trees, spreading their umbrageous shadows over herds of browsing deer or glossy kine,—the interminable avenues, across which glided the timid hare, or the woods through which flew the startled pheasants, were thought of with dread, as compared with the parched and dusky Park; where, if neither shade nor freshness was to be obtained, beaux were to be met with, and hope might be indulged. But to return from young ladies in

general, to one young lady in particular, Emily saw the close of the season arrive with much the same feelings that she would have left a brilliant *fête*—the regret of its departure cheered by the belief of its certain renewal. Her cheek was a shade more pale, her eyes a degree less brilliant than three months before; for late hours, heated rooms, and the rational mode—universally adopted during a London season—of running through a course of balls, routs, operas, concerts, and plays, that would impair the most robust constitution, had somewhat weakened hers, and rendered a temporary retirement necessary, if not desirable. She nevertheless quitted London the undeposed sovereign of its beauties, having reigned, and been acknowledged as such a whole season,—an empire that few beauties have so long sustained undisputed.

We pass over the long autumn, and longer winter, spent in the country, which intervened between her first and second season in London, lest our readers might find the detail of it as dull as our heroine did the reality. Accustomed to the factitious excitement of continual amusement, and as continual admiration, the

monotony of a country life appeared insupportably dull to one who possessed so very few resources within herself, for rendering the flight of the arch enemy, Time, less tediously felt. Dancing, the only accomplishment she had acquired, was nearly useless, when its practice was only called into action at an occasional dull county ball, to be opened with a still more dull county member, or provincial dandy. Books she was debarred from enjoying by the prohibition of her mother, who left but few, and those not of an amusing character, within her reach; so that it is not to be wondered at, that poor Emily sighed for the return of spring, when she anticipated again enjoying the same round of brilliant amusements and intoxicating admiration, that had rendered the past season so delightful to her. It is true there were moments—nay, more than moments—hours, when wandering through the fine scenery of her home, her heart acknowledged the charms of all-beauteous nature, and her imagination revelled in them. The velvet lawns, the fields enamelled with flowers, the trees waving their leafy honours over grassy mounds, rendered almost

impervious to the sunbeams that tried to pierce through them, and the rising woods, whose dense green seemed as a verdant wall, excluding all, save the blue mountains, and bluer skies that rose above them. The wild birds sending forth notes of joy, and the rich flowers exhaling perfume,—each, and all of these had charms for Emily; but she wanted some one to whom she could say how charming all this was: or, perhaps, she wanted still more that cultivation of mind that would have enabled her to derive a still greater enjoyment—an all-sufficing sense of peaceful happiness, and gratitude from such scenes and objects. The poetry of such scenes was slumbering in her soul as music in an instrument, but it required a master hand to awaken it.

Behold her once more whirled into the giddy vortex of fashion, fully counting on being again, as formerly, its idol.

Alas! she was now a deposed sovereign; another, not a fairer, but a *newer* votary, was proclaimed the reigning beauty of the season; and Emily found herself thrown down from the

throne, to which, only a few fleeting months before, she had been elevated by the fickle crowd, who now offered to her successor the homage that had been hers, and burned the incense that had smoked on the altars raised to her charms, on that erected to those of another. Her *coiffure* was no longer adopted by other *belles*; her peculiarities no longer imitated; robes were no more named after her; songs no longer written on, nor new gallopades nor waltzes dedicated to her. Fancy-fairs hailed her no more as their magnet of attraction, and annuals sought not her countenance. In short, she had fallen into the sear and yellow leaf,—her occupation was gone!

Emily looked into the mirror to see if this strange change in her late brilliant position arose from a diminution in the beauty that had achieved her empire; but for once a mirror deceived not; for it gave back from its polished surface the same lovely face, only wearing a more *reflective* expression than it exhibited the year before. London now became irksome to her; wherever she went she saw

her successor receiving the homage so lately hers, or heard the most exaggerated reports of her charms, and their influence.

"I too was a beauty!" sighed poor Emily, in the solitude of her dressing-room; when, with more pensiveness than the Arcadians are represented on perusing the inscription on the tomb, in Poussin's delineation of one of the fairest scenes in Arcady the Blest, she contemplated her own image in the mirror.

"But of what advantage was my beauty?" soliloquized Emily; "it won me a short-lived admiration, it is true, but it did not win me love." And then followed the recollection of Henry Wilmot, mingled with a feminine curiosity, in which a stronger feeling than mere womanly vanity might be traced, of whether *he* too admired the new beauty? "Ah!" sighed Emily, "had I not been dazzled by the general admiration I excited, I might have created a real sentiment of affection in some worthy heart; but *idols* meet with more public worship than private devotion."

Emily now began to *think*, a mental operation to which few young ladies of seventeen are much

prone, and fewer still have leisure or capability for, in a London season. Seldom is an acquaintance formed with thought, without its ripening into a *friendship*—the most advantageous perhaps of all those which beauty ever forms. She sought books, and found in the good ones placed in her hands by a few acquaintances, whom her unpretending simplicity of character and gentleness of manners had captivated, a source of inexhaustible interest and delight. Her mind quickly expanded, and her natural acuteness enabled her to comprehend, as it were intuitively, and at a grasp, the knowledge that a neglected education had hitherto debarred her from. The charming *naïveté* of her remarks, and the natural good sense that distinguished them, attracted those whom her ephemeral celebrity had kept at a distance; and, from their conversation, she derived at once instruction and delight. Her thirst for information was only to be satisfied by deep draughts of the Pierean spring; and the facility with which she acquired knowledge, soon became apparent. Her countenance gained new charms by the expression of intelligence it now wore; and she ceased

to sigh at the recollection,--nay, almost to remember the days of her vain triumph, with regret, or to lament its cessation.

Among the persons who frequented the house of Lady Mansel, was Dr. Herbert, a man of singular skill in his profession, and as singular for the vast erudition with which his mind was stored, and the readiness with which its attainments were brought forth in his conversation, which was at once profound yet perspicacious, imaginative, and brilliant. Dr. Herbert was scarcely more *récherché* as a physician, than as an instructive and amusing companion: his opinion on literary points was generally respected; and, while prescribing for the bodily ailments of his patients, he was never inattentive to the mental ones, and could always name the work most likely to afford amusement, or beguile the tedium of convalescence. It was the good fortune of Emily to attract the attention of this clever and worthy man, and to inspire a warm interest in his breast. His frequent visits to the mother, who was, or fancied herself in want of his skill, gave him constant opportunities of conversing with the daughter. He supplied

her with well chosen books, and elicited her sentiments on them, drawing forth her dormant powers of mind, and, by supplying it only with healthful food, strengthened while cultivating it. Dr. Herbert was also the physician of Mrs. Wilmot, and happened, inadvertently, while sitting with that lady one day, to mention what a charming person Miss Mansel was.

"Yes, very beautiful, I understand," said Mrs. Wilmot;—"but uninformed—a mere beauty."

"But a very unspoilt one, mother," observed her son, who was looking over the morning papers; "for I never saw a girl so much admired betray so little symptom of vanity."

It was now the turn of Dr. Herbert to speak, and he pronounced an eloquent eulogium on Emily: he admitted how grievously her education had been neglected, and dwelt with animation on the good sense that led her to apply, with such patient diligence, to repair this misfortune, and the natural ability that rendered this task so easy and successful. In short, the good doctor said all that he thought, and nothing more than his protégée deserved; and as he was

known to be no enthusiast, his opinion was respected by his hearers, one of whom was but too well disposed to believe all that could be asserted in favour of the beautiful girl he had danced with two or three times the previous season, and avoided ever after. Why had he avoided her? Ah, there lies the mystery!—a mystery that often puzzled and pained the fair Emily to solve, but which, if she had solved, the pain would not have been diminished.

Attracted by her beauty, Henry Wilmot had sought an introduction to Miss Mansel, though with a preconceived prejudice against professed beauties, that required all the unaffected modesty of Emily's demeanour to conquer sufficiently, for him to seek her acquaintance. He attributed to maidenly reserve and youthful timidity, the monosyllabic replies with which she met all his remarks on the last new novel, or the light literature of the day. He held in dread, if not in horror, the well read young ladies of the modern school, who read all, judge all, and pronounce on all, with courage at least, if not often with judgment; yet still he could have wished that the lovely creature

he was addressing had been less reserved in expressing her opinions ; for he thought, and with reason, that there is no better criterion for judging of a woman, than by the books she prefers, and the passages in them that she remembers. He consoled himself with the belief, that so intelligent a countenance could not belong to a dull or weak intellect, and that on a further acquaintance, her reserve would subside, and permit him to form a better estimate of her mental qualifications.

At this epoch, dining one day at Lady Tyrconnel's, where the beauty of Miss Mansel was the subject of conversation, some one remarked that that young lady was very deficient in conversation, never replying but in monosyllables.

"That is not very extraordinary," observed Lady Tyrconnel; "for her late governess is now with my daughters; and a very clever, intelligent person she is; and she tells me, that Lady Mansel prohibited her second daughter's being instructed in any of the accomplishments taught young ladies, dancing, alone excepted, fearful that the application necessary for acquir-

ing them might impair her beauty; so that the poor girl literally knows nothing, being only sufficiently instructed to prevent her speaking ungrammatically in French or English. Mademoiselle Lavasseur declares, that since her infancy the poor young person has heard of nothing but her beauty, and that consequently, she is *bête comme Dieu sait quoi.* Lady Westonville, the elder sister, not being a beauty, was allowed to acquire all that mademoiselle could teach her, aided by the best masters in London; so she is, I understand, a prodigy of accomplishments."

As Lady Tyrconnel was known to be neither peculiarly ill-natured, nor of unstrict veracity, had no daughters to bring out, whose success in society Emily might have endangered, and was herself past the age of being either envious or jealous of the beauty of the season, Henry Wilmot listened to her statement with painful interest, and a perfect belief in its correctness. *Now* were the monosyllabic replies of Emily accounted for, and the resolution formed, which he afterwards adhered to, of avoiding her; for a merely beautiful girl, without mental cultiva-

tion, was, in his opinion, little better than an automaton, and one he should blush to love; though to love her he felt a very growing inclination. Dr. Herbert's description renewed all this feeling; and the first time he encountered Emily at a ball, he, to her surprise and pleasure, asked her to dance.

The *gallope* over, seated by the side of his fair partner, Henry Wilmot talked on the common topics of the day, and no longer was he answered by concise negatives or affirmatives, though her manner was quite as far removed from that unbecoming freedom which marks so many young ladies, as from the stupid common-places that appertain to the conversation of others of the sex. Her observations were characterised by good sense, refined taste, and that delicate tact which is a sure proof of mental superiority, and were delivered in words at once well chosen and elegant, and with a tone and manner equally removed from an awkward reserve, as from levity or boldness.—Henry Wilmot became fascinated, and sought the hand of Emily at every ball during the season; while she, never opened a book without

wondering what Mr. Wilmot would think of it, or dressed for a fête, without hoping that her toilette would please him. It was towards the close of the season, at a *déjeûné* given to five hundred friends, by the Marchioness of Waldershaw at her beautiful villa, that Henry Wilmot declared himself the lover of Emily, and sought her permission to address her mother. She had known, for some time, that he loved her; for what woman, however young, remains long ignorant of a passion she has inspired? and least of all, when she partakes it. Yet this avowal, though it convinced her of what she would have been wretched to doubt, the affection of him to whom she had given her heart even before he asked it, brought a pang, that followed quickly the first joyful sensation, almost overpowered by maiden bashfulness, that his declaration filled her soul with.

Emily remembered with dread her mother's often repeated assertion, that never would she grant her hand to any untitled suitor, whatever his wealth might be, and that nothing less than a marquisite, at least, would satisfy her views. Knowing this, and knowing also the obstinacy

of her mother's character, why—why had she encouraged the attentions of Mr. Wilmot? and why had she allowed herself to love one whose suit her mother never would sanction? These were questions that Emily asked herself, alas! too late. The mischief was done, and her heart shrank before the prospect that presented itself to her mind. How was she to tell Henry that nothing short of a strawberry-leaf coronet could satisfy her mother's views? And yet, was it not better to tell him so, in kind and sorrowing words, than let the avowal come in harsh and imperious ones from her mother? Henry Wilmot's fortune was so large, and his family so ancient, that it never occurred to him that Lady Mansel could reject his proposal; hence the embarrassment and pensive air of Emily alarmed and almost offended him. She broke her mother's sentiments to him with all the tact that so peculiarly belonged to her; and to console him, promised that to no one save him, should the little hand that trembled in his, ever belong.

In short, Emily left the garden of Waldershaw-house, with plighted vows, though she

sighed as she reflected how remote was the period at which (if ever) she could become Henry Wilmot's wife. She saw, in *triste* perspective, long—long years of hope deferred and sickness of heart; with candidates for her hand, encouraged by her mother, and repulsed by herself, and the consequent discord her repulses would be sure to cause, embittering her life. All this, and more, Emily foreboded, for she had imagination as well as sense; and never did a young lady seek her pillow the night of the first positive avowal of love from the man she prefers, with more sadness than did she.

"Yes," sighed Emily, Shakspeare was right,

"The course of true love never did run smooth,
But either it was different in blood—
Or else misgrafted, in respect of years;
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—
Or if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That (in a spleen) unfolds both heav'n and earth;
And, ere a man hath power to say behold,
The jaws of darkness do devour it up—
So quick bright things come to confusion."

"And now mine will be the dreary lot of dragging on existence with a heart and hand

plighted to one, whom my mother never will sanction."

Parents find it difficult to understand that the creature, who for years was obedient to their commands, and dependent on their will, should, on arriving at womanhood, refuse compliance with the first, and assert their independence of the second. They forget that their offspring, in ceasing to be children, are prone to entertain sentiments and opinions that are often totally opposite to theirs, and are jealous of the freedom of volition, if not of action, that they seek to display.

To permit daughters to think, feel, or act for themselves, is far from agreeable to the generality of parents; who feel it, as one may imagine the parent bird of a nest to do when she first sees her young ones take wing and then fly away for ever, while *she* is left to brood over the forsaken nest. It never entered into the weak mind of Lady Mansel, that *her* daughter could for a moment dispute her wishes, and this conviction she too often betrayed in the avowal of her plans and expectations for Emily's future prospects, to admit of her remaining

ignorant of her mother's imagined supremacy not only over her conduct but her destiny. Luckily for her daughter, Lady Mansel seldom attended balls and routs, so that she was confided to the care of a *chaperone*, who observed not, or if she observed, reported not to *madame mère*, the constant attentions of Mr. Wilmot to Emily.

A visit was now to be paid to Lady Westonville, the first since her marriage; as that lady had not seen her mother or sister since that period, Lord Westonville not having quitted his seat in the country since he had taken his bride there. Melancholy was the parting of Emily and Henry Wilmot, yet she resisted his urgent entreaties, and the secret inclinations of her own heart, to keep up a clandestine correspondence with him. When were they to meet again? was a question, that both scarcely dared to ask themselves, for the *next spring* seemed at an interminable distance from August, to those who loved, and must be through these long intervening months separated. Both felt —but Emily's woman's heart much more poignantly—the certainty that day after day, week

after week, and month after month, must roll away before they could again meet. To breathe the same air, to be sure that their eyes would encounter in the streets or in the Park, each and every day, had hitherto given happiness; then the balls, routs, and concerts, where they could always exchange a few words, and where Emily could, and regularly did, *à la dérobé*, give Henry the *bouquet* she had worn—had kept alive hope and strengthened affection, and was much to hearts that loved like theirs,—and now all this was to cease!

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